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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/86, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. It describes efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

The reporting period is from May 2012 to April 2013. During this period, the Palestinian Authority continued to implement the National Development Plan for 2011-2013. The United Nations enhanced its support to those efforts through its Medium-Term Response Plan and its work with the Palestinian Authority to develop a United Nations Development Action Framework. The United Nations development programming includes capacity development, infrastructure and the provision of direct assistance and basic services. This work is focused on six strategic areas: (a) governance, human rights and rule of law; (b) education and culture; (c) livelihoods, food security and employment; (d) health care; (e) social protection; and (f) infrastructure, water and sanitation. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.9 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes in the State of Palestine, of which $1.2 billion was funded as at April 2012. This complements the humanitarian programming outlined in the 2013 Consolidated Appeals Process of $401.6 million.

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Direct negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel remained elusive during the reporting period. Unemployment and food insecurity increased and restrictions to movement remained in place, hindering development efforts. Improved socioeconomic conditions can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation which, in turn, require further easing of movement and land and sea access.

During the reporting period, the United Nations continued its efforts to respond to development and humanitarian challenges in the context of occupation, focusing particularly on areas where the Palestinian Authority was least able to extend its services, namely, Gaza, and Area C and East Jerusalem of the West Bank.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/86, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. Also included is a summary of key political developments and challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community continued to work to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority and negotiations between the parties. The reporting period is from May 2012 to April 2013.

2. Information on the living and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular: (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/67/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several documents. The Consolidated Appeals Process for 2013, with a narrower focus than in previous years, is seeking $401.6 million to address the humanitarian needs by enhancing the protective environment and tackling food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, Area C, including the seam zone, and East Jerusalem. The United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities for the period 2011-2013, in alignment with the current Palestinian National Development Plan. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy, which was estimated at $655 million for 2011-2012, excluding emergency relief interventions. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 outlined priority development needs amounting to $2.468 billion.

4. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority continued its efforts to support the peace process and to ensure effective coordination among the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

5. Direct negotiations between the parties remain elusive. Quiet exchanges continued in an effort to create a conducive environment and return to talks. Following the Israeli elections on 22 January 2013, a new coalition Government was sworn in by the Knesset on 18 March 2013. In his first foreign trip of his second term, United States President Barack Obama visited Israel, the West Bank and Jordan from 20 to 23 March 2013. Secretary of State John Kerry returned to the region at the beginning of April for separate follow-up meetings with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, both of whom reiterated their commitment to a negotiated two-State solution. The renewed engagement by the United States of America marks an important opening towards breaking the political deadlock. It also offers an opportunity to mobilize consensus in the region and beyond, including through the Quartet, in support of reinvigorating efforts towards a two-State solution.

6. On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/19, accorded the State of Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations. On the same day, the Secretary-General stated that the vote underlined the urgency of a resumption of meaningful negotiations to ensure that an independent, sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine lives side by side with a secure State of Israel.

7. Following the adoption of the resolution, the Government of Israel announced that it would approve new plans for settlement construction of thousands of housing units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and that planning would proceed in the E-1 area of the West Bank. President Abbas stated that building in E-1, an area that is key for the contiguity of the West Bank, would cross what he described as a red line. Settler violence against Palestinians and their property, under the so-called price tag policy, as well as Palestinian attacks on Israelis in the West Bank continued to be of serious concern. Settlement activity is illegal under international law and runs counter to Israel's commitments under the road map. Israel should heed the calls of the international community to stop such activity.

8. Also following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19, regular transfers of clearance revenue from Israel to the Palestinian Authority were disrupted, compounding its dire financial situation while facing a decrease in foreign aid, the failure of donor countries to fulfil their financial pledges and slowing economic activity in the State of Palestine. Delays resulted in the non-payment of Palestinian Authority employees, which triggered strikes and demonstrations. In addition to social unrest, the hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and the death of two Palestinian prisoners under Israeli custody sparked a series of popular demonstrations and clashes with Israeli security forces in the West Bank, which resulted in the death of 11 Palestinian protesters between September 2012 and April 2013 and hundreds of injuries. On the occasion of Palestinian Prisoners' Day, 17 April, some 3,000 prisoners went on hunger strike for the day and demonstrations were held in main West Bank cities. The United Nations remains concerned about the conditions of the prisoners on protracted hunger strike. The Secretary-General has urged that a solution be reached without delay, including by addressing all unresolved issues included in the May 2012 agreement. Although the Palestinian Authority continued to make progress in its State-building agenda, including the

organization of local elections in the West Bank, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee noted, at its meeting in Brussels on 19 March 2013, that such achievements might not be sustainable given the continued political impasse, the deteriorating reality on the ground, negative socioeconomic and security trends, and the dire fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority.

9. In a related development of note, on 13 April, President Abbas accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, who is expected to continue carrying out his functions as caretaker until a new Prime Minister is announced. The United Nations recognized that Prime Minister Fayyad had had to contend with circumstances that kept constraining the success of the State-building agenda he led together with President Abbas which, in the absence of a credible political horizon, was at serious risk.

10. In Gaza and southern Israel, a dangerous escalation of violence occurred in November 2012. Eight days of fighting resulted in an estimated 158 Palestinians killed, including 103 civilians, and some 1,269 Palestinians reportedly injured, while 6 Israelis, including 4 civilians, were reported killed by Palestinian rocket fire and 224 Israelis were injured, the vast majority civilians. A bomb attack in Tel Aviv on 21 November injured 23 civilians, 3 of them severely. The Egyptian-brokered ceasefire "understanding" of 21 November allowed for one of the longest periods without projectiles being fired from Gaza in recent years and tangible easing of the closure. However, rockets fired from Gaza on 26 February, 21 March and 2 and 7 April 2013 resulted in Israel's decision to rescind the extension of the fishing limit, bringing it back to 3 nautical miles from its original 6 nautical miles, and restricted travel by Palestinians and goods into and out of Gaza. In reaction to the shooting of rockets, Israel also closed the Kerem Shalom crossing from 8 to 11 April. Since 26 February, this crossing, which is the only passage for goods from Israel into Gaza, has been closed for 29 out of 56 days. International efforts continued, notably by Egypt, to solidify the calm, prevent the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, advance the lifting of the closure, and fully implement Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

11. The full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009) also entails overcoming the Palestinian political divide in ways that can advance the potential for a two-State solution. Egypt continued to facilitate the implementation of previous agreements, and a meeting between President Abbas and Khaled Meshaal was held on 10 January 2013 in Cairo. One of the results of that meeting was that the Palestinian Central Elections Commission was authorized to register some 240,000 new electors in Gaza, for the first time since 2007. The Chairman of the Commission has since declared that it is technically prepared to organize any election, once so decided. Hamas and Fatah have resumed informal working-level meetings but discussions on the implementation of existing agreements have advanced only a little. On 2 April, Khaled Meshaal was re-elected head of the Hamas Political Bureau. A day earlier, President Abbas reiterated his position, in accordance with the agreement signed at Doha in February 2012 that he was prepared to lead a technical interim government, which should prepare for elections 90 days into its term. The United Nations continued to support efforts to promote reconciliation under the leadership of President Abbas through Egyptian auspices and within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the positions of the Quartet, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

12. In spite of the lack of progress on negotiations, the renewed engagement by the United States and the stated recommitments by the parties to the two-State solution allow for a glimmer of hope, provided that this renewed engagement is followed up with determination. The parties must now show the political will to cooperate, with concerted action by the international community, including through the Quartet, and with the support of key Arab, regional and other stakeholders. The Palestinians have a legitimate right to their own independent State and Israel has the right to live in peace and security with its neighbours. There is no substitute for negotiations and no viable alternative to the two-State solution, making the resumption of meaningful talks all the more urgent.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

13. The Government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad continued to implement key economic and fiscal reforms. Total revenues were 6 per cent lower than budget, while total expenditures and net lending were 12 per cent higher than their forecasts in 2012. Consequently, the year-end recurrent deficit was 55 per cent above its budget.

14. Real growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 5.6 per cent in the West Bank and 6.6 per cent in the Gaza Strip in 2012.[1] This, however, reflected a slowdown in the economy since the real GDP was estimated at 10.7 per cent for 2011. Recent growth was driven by the services sector in the West Bank and by the construction sector in Gaza. There has not been enough growth in the productive sectors of the economy to be sustainable and absorb new entrants into the labour markets.

15. In this context, unemployment increased to 19 per cent in 2012 from 17.3 per cent in 2011 in the West Bank, and to 31 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012, up from 28.7 per cent in 2011 in the Gaza Strip. Women and young people are particularly affected by the lack of jobs.[2] Palestine refugees are also affected, with a 2012 overall unemployment rate of 27.8 per cent compared with 19.8 per cent for the rest of the population.

16. Related to this absence of economic opportunities, poverty continues to affect large proportions of the population. A number of factors are also placing pressure on food security in the State of Palestine. The percentage of households facing food insecurity increased from 27 per cent in 2011 to 33.5 per cent in 2012 overall. Broken down by area, 57 per cent of households in Gaza and 19 per cent in the West Bank faced food insecurity in 2012[3]. In absolute terms, this translates into 1.5 million food-insecure Palestinians. The economic situation of the Palestinian Authority contributed to a deterioration in food security levels, reversing the

[1] See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts, Fourth Quarter, 2012" (March 2013), available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps.

[2] See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force Survey (October-December 2012) Round (Q4/2012)", available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps.

[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, forthcoming "2012 Socioeconomic and Food Security Survey Report".

improvement in food security gains witnessed in 2010 and 2011. Further reductions in poverty and improved food security can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation which, in turn, require further easing of movement and access restrictions that currently hinder private sector activity.[4]

17. Given the limited size and purchasing power of the local market, the transfer of goods and services from Gaza to the West Bank and exports to Israel and beyond are key to expanding the State of Palestine's productive base, generating employment and reducing poverty. The tradable sectors of the economy, which are the most affected by the restrictions on movement and access, have shrunk over time, affecting the sustainability of any growth.

18. Concerns about the long-term prospects of the Palestinian economy continue to include the need for recovery of the private sector, a reduction in dependency on foreign aid, diversification of the economy, access to natural resources and removal of access restrictions on people and goods.

Humanitarian developments

19. During the reporting period, 258 Palestinians were killed (244 in Gaza, including 111 militants; 14 in the West Bank; overall, 48 children and 17 women) and 5,492 were injured (1,722 in Gaza; 3,770 in the West Bank; overall, 864 children and 118 women) by Israeli security forces. The number of killed and injured represents a significant increase compared with 101 fatalities and 2,215 injuries during the previous period, mostly as a result of the conflict in Gaza in November 2012. In the West Bank, growing settler violence towards Palestinians resulted in 144 injuries (including 32 children and 15 women) and damage to property. A total of 7 Israelis (including 4 civilians) were killed and 405 were injured during the reporting period, compared with 11 Israelis killed and 91 injured during the previous reporting period.

20. As at the end of February 2013, 236 Palestinian children between the ages of 12 and 17 years (including 39 between the ages of 12 and 15 years) were in Israeli detention for alleged security violations. Moreover, the February 2013 report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) entitled "Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations" stated that the ill-treatment of children that come in contact with the military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized throughout the process, from the moment of arrest until the child's prosecution and eventual conviction and sentencing (see p. 1 of the report).

21. Demolitions of housing and livelihood assets continued. A total of 488 structures were demolished, displacing 714 persons, more than half of them children. A total of 3,327 persons have been affected by the demolitions of housing and livelihood assets.

[4] Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "Palestinian State-building: an achievement at increased risk", Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting, Brussels, 21 March 2012.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

22. Access to and movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, remained restricted. As at June 2012, there were approximately 542 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, 4 per cent more than in July 2011. Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C hinder development efforts, resulting in deteriorating living conditions and increased vulnerability.

23. A number of easing measures implemented since mid-June 2012 at main checkpoints significantly reduced the time spent by some 15,000 Palestinians travelling to and from Jerusalem every day. However, more generally, access to the city by holders of West Bank identification cards continues to be restricted by the barrier, checkpoints and the permit system, whereby an entry permit issued by Israeli authorities that is often difficult to obtain is required.

24. As detailed in paragraph 10 above, in Gaza, there was a fluctuation in restrictions on land and sea access imposed by the Government of Israel following operation "Pillar of Defence" in November 2012.

25. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2012 to March 2013, there were 522 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members at Israeli checkpoints. The majority of these incidents occurred as United Nations staff crossed the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery.

Barrier

26. Construction of the barrier continued in the north-west of the Bethlehem Governorate. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 24 January 2007 continued its outreach and claim intake activities. More than 36,000 claims and over 400,000 supporting documents were collected. Claim intake activities in the Tubas, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and Salfit Governorates were completed and the work is well-advanced in the Ramallah Governorate. Outreach and claim intake activities in the Hebron Governorate have also been initiated.

27. Approximately 150 Palestinian communities have land isolated between the barrier and the Green Line and are obliged to use a "prior coordination" mechanism or obtain "visitor" permits from Israeli authorities to access their land. There was an increase in the number of permits issued during the last olive harvest but authorities still rejected many applications citing "security reasons" or insufficient proof of "connection to the land".

III. United Nations response

28. The United Nations system provided its support within the framework of the Palestinian National Development Plan and has been working closely with the Palestinian Authority in developing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine, a strategic planning framework that will guide United Nations development programming between 2014 and 2016 and align with

the forthcoming 2014-2016 Palestinian National Development Plan. The Framework places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming with the aim to enhance human security, thereby setting the foundation for human development objectives in a context of occupation.

29. The humanitarian system responded effectively to the hostilities in Gaza in November 2012, during which the United Nations and its partners continued working to ensure, to the extent possible, that people were able to continue receiving food, other assistance and access to essential services. Only a few days after the ceasefire, programmes resumed and a rapid assessment of the humanitarian consequences of the hostilities was conducted, on the basis of which responsive programming was undertaken.

A. Human and social development

30. The vision of the United Nations for the State of Palestine is that all people can fully enjoy human rights, peace, prosperity, freedom and dignity in an independent and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. United Nations agencies work to strengthen the capacity and resilience of people and institutions in government, civil society and the private sector, in pursuit of human security and sustainable human development for all people in the State of Palestine, within the framework of respect for the rule of law and human rights. The United Nations places special emphasis on furthering the State-building agenda and strengthening community resilience and steadfastness in the context of the ongoing occupation. The United Nations development programming includes capacity development, infrastructure and the provision of direct assistance and basic services. This work is focused on six strategic areas: (a) governance, human rights and rule of law; (b) education and culture; (c) livelihoods, food security and employment; (d) health care; (e) social protection; and (f) infrastructure, water and sanitation. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.9 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes in the State of Palestine, an estimated $1.2 billion of which was funded as at April 2012.

31. Illustrative examples of the types of assistance provided by the United Nations, are set out below.

Education

32. In 2012, UNRWA provided free education to 276,052 registered refugee students enrolled in 345 elementary and preparatory schools across the West Bank and Gaza, with an average occupancy of 34 and 39 students per class respectively. In Gaza, 91 per cent of schools currently operate on a double-shift system while in the West Bank, only 6 per cent are temporarily on the double-shift system to accommodate new school construction.

33. Nine United Nations agencies supported the Ministry of Education through the "Education for All" package for inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development. Pilot schools (32 schools in the West Bank and 14 schools in Gaza) benefited from school-feeding and capacity development programmes. For the first time, the Ministry of Education opened preschool classrooms in eight of the pilot schools in the West Bank. UNICEF also continued to support the construction of preschool classrooms in Gaza.

34. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNRWA continued collaboration on a Gaza initiative whereby 335 over-age students[5] (86 girls and 249 boys) were enrolled in six-month training courses tailored to job market demands and culturally accessible jobs for women. The agencies organized six-month apprenticeship placements in a field relevant to the students who completed vocational training.

35. Within its child-friendly school approach, UNICEF supported the capacity development of education supervisors on active learning strategies and techniques and the training of 1,600 educators in active learning methods.

36. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme continued to implement the Al Fakhoura Scholarship Programme for Gazan students. UNDP also supported the construction of schools and worked towards assessing the education needs of the Palestinian population, drawing on poverty scoring and livelihood assessments under the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme as well as community assessments carried out for the Community Resilience and Development Programme for Area C and East Jerusalem.

Health care

37. UNRWA continued to operate 42 health-care facilities, 21 health points and five mobile clinics in the West Bank, employing over 2,000 staff. Nearly 30,000 refugees in the West Bank received assistance for hospital-care costs. In Gaza, UNRWA operated 21 primary health-care centres, serving 1.2 million refugees. These also serve as one-stop centres to address gender-based violence, where clients access health care, psychosocial support and legal aid in one easily accessible location.

38. The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, finalized the National Health Information System assessment and strategy. It also continued to support the establishment of a National Institute of Public Health to build core public health functions, including strengthening surveillance systems and registries, developing capacity in analysis of hospital health-care management, commissioning and conducting applied public health research, and increasing the effective use of data for setting health-care policies and priorities.

39. WHO also continued to support quality improvement in service delivery by conducting capacity development training for Ministry of Health staff. In Gaza, it continued to implement programmes to improve the quality and safety of childbirth care at the seven main public hospitals. WHO also continued to provide technical assistance to maintain the functioning of public health-care services and helped in coordinating the import of medical supplies to Gaza.

40. WHO continued its programme to support East Jerusalem hospitals, which serve as the main referral centres for tertiary care for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. It also continued to support the hospitals' efforts to achieve Joint

[5] The term "over-age student" refers to students who are older than the typical age for their corresponding grade.

Commission International accreditation in 2013 and to institutionalize the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network.

41. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the rehabilitation, equipping and capacity development of maternity and primary health-care centres in an effort to improve the quality of obstetric-care provision and reproductive health-care services at the secondary and primary levels. In addition, UNFPA continued to support the institutionalization of a maternal mortality surveillance system. UNICEF supported improved health-care services through mobile clinics in 29 communities in the Jordan Valley and Area C.

42. UNICEF supported the capacity-building of 259 doctors and nurses in health-care centres and emergency wards in the area of community-based integrated management of childhood illnesses. It also trained 200 health-care workers in the introduction of new vaccines and the updated national expanded programme for immunizations, maintaining high immunization rates among the most vulnerable communities. UNICEF also supported the post-natal home visits programme, which reached around 3,000 at-risk mothers and newborns, and referred those in need for specialized care at health-care facilities.

Employment

43. UNDP started the second phase of the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme, targeting 12,000 families living below the national poverty line. The first phase of the programme graduated 7,000 families from deep poverty and created 12,000 sustainable employment opportunities.

44. UNDP and ILO continued to support the Technical Advisory Unit at the Ministry of Labour in efforts to implement effective labour market policies.

45. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued a programme which provided income generation and self-employment opportunities in food processing and marketing for women in 41 women's centres. The programme directly benefited 536 women workers, and over 35,800 women benefited from the services provided at the centres. The activity also benefited more than 258 schools and over 100,000 schoolchildren who receive healthy and affordable snacks made by women from the community-based centres, contributing to improved health of the community.

Targeted social protection

46. UNRWA distributed 140,569 food parcels and $1.4 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 11,889 households through its special hardship cases programme in the West Bank. In Gaza, it distributed 426,161 food parcels to 21,626 households, along with $6.7 million in cash assistance through the social safety net programme.

47. ILO provided technical assistance to the newly established National Wage Committee, which helped to secure approval of a minimum wage by the Palestinian Authority. It also continued its support to the establishment of an integrated social security system in the State of Palestine by providing assistance to tripartite stakeholders in the development of a social security system for the private sector.

Culture

48. After yearly requests by the World Heritage Committee since 2010 for a technical mission of experts to examine the state of conservation of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls, the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reached an agreement on 23 April 2013 to send a mission of experts to Israel in mid-May 2013.

49. UNESCO continued to lead a multi-agency programme on culture and development funded through the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund in the areas of cultural heritage norms and legislation, inventorying intangible heritage, conservation and planning for potential world heritage sites.

50. UNESCO also continued to support the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to enable sound representation of Palestinian cultural and natural sites, particularly after the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route in Bethlehem was the first Palestinian site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List in June 2012. It also continued to support the construction of the visitor's centre at the Tell Balata Archaeological Park in Nablus.

51. Through a partnership with the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem and the Islamic University of Gaza, UNESCO is supporting construction efforts for the conservation of the archaeological site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer, south of Gaza City.

Food security and agriculture

52. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported roughly 1,000 women and 3,700 farmers and their associations to achieve improved economic conditions and food security through the provision of agricultural inputs, skills training and marketing support. FAO also assisted more than 3,800 male-headed households and 1,900 female-headed households in the West Bank and Gaza to safeguard their assets and expand their livelihoods. Its interventions also focused on empowering women as agents of development in their homes and communities.

53. UNDP, through its rural development programme, directly enhanced the productivity of at least 4,000 hectares of agricultural land and established services and infrastructure that encouraged farmers to cultivate and utilize an additional 7,000 hectares using private investments.

Human rights, women, children and youth

54. The United Nations continued to mainstream human rights into all of its work and to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority in human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) worked closely with the Palestinian Authority on the ongoing process of preparing a national action plan on human rights, which will be an integral part of the forthcoming National Development Plan. OHCHR also worked with the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its administrative capacity, with a view towards becoming a State party to the core international human rights conventions, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. OHCHR continued its work with the Independent Commission for Human Rights and with

non-governmental organization partners though capacity-building activities focused on monitoring human rights violations and advocacy skills.

55. WHO continued to lead advocacy efforts on the right to health, focus on, inter alia, access of referral patients to specialized care in East Jerusalem hospitals and outside the State of Palestine. Fewer Gazan patients had their permits to exit denied or delayed in 2012: 7.5 per cent in 2012, down from 10.2 per cent in 2011 and 40 per cent in 2006.

56. In late 2012, United Nations agencies organized a 16-day awareness-raising campaign to educate young people on gender-based violence. There were approximately 3,339 participants in UNRWA's campaign activities. More broadly, the UNRWA family and child protection programme reached more than 10,000 refugees in a wide variety of community-awareness and prevention activities. UNDP enhanced the national responses and capacities to address gender-based violence through the development and delivery of a training curriculum and by developing the capacities of 229 judges, lawyers, law students and prosecutors to deal with gender-based violence cases. UNFPA supported the development of a manual on gender-based violence with the Ministry of Health and increased the capacity of national health-care providers in managing gender-based violence cases. In addition, UNFPA built the capacity of community-based organizations to document violations relating to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

57. UN-Women continued to support 49 women's centres across the West Bank and Gaza, including the building, rehabilitation and activation of 8 new community-based women's centres that offer a wide range of psychosocial, legal and social services. In Gaza, UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, supported the establishment and operation of the first comprehensive service centre for women victims of violence, the Hayat Centre, through which 125 women benefited from psychological, social and legal services.

58. Acting under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs, UN-Women continued to support the Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families, which hosted and protected a monthly average of 20 women and their children from violence and provided a range of social and legal services.

59. UN-Women worked with the Palestinian Bar Association to provide legal support and representation to women inmates in the Correction and Rehabilitation Centres and to women victims of violence and with the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre Department in developing and implementing rehabilitation activities for female inmates.

60. The young women leaders programme in Gaza implemented through the UNRWA Gender Initiative is aimed at closing a skills gap in the labour market by ensuring that women are developing skills demanded by the labour market through theoretical and practical training courses, work placement schemes and small- and medium-enterprise training. In 2012, 700 women received training under the programme.

61. UNICEF supported psychosocial emergency teams and family centres, which reached over 46,000 children (in addition to 20,112 parents and caregivers) to mitigate the effect of trauma and to alleviate psychosocial distress and strengthen resilience in the West Bank and Gaza.

62. With the support of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, six non-governmental organization partners and the Higher Council of Palestinian Youth and Sport provided opportunities for over 31,200 adolescents to develop their capacities, skills and knowledge and provided psychosocial support through 56 safe spaces in the West Bank and Gaza.

Environment, housing and urban development

63. FAO, in cooperation with local communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, supported the rehabilitation and greening of roughly 2,000 dunums of rangeland in the southern West Bank in 2012.

64. UNDP provided support for adequate housing to nearly 80 low-income families through rehabilitation and renovation interventions in Jerusalem. In addition, UNDP provided support to improve the economic infrastructure by enhancing the physical situation of a number of shops and business facilities.

65. UNDP supported land protection and development in Area C, along with the Ministry of Agriculture, that served to establish infrastructure for cultivating land (roads, harvesting schemes, increased water storage capacities, reclaiming of unused land) and helped to protect thousands of hectares from confiscation and provide sustainable income to more than 8,000 rural families.

66. UNDP and FAO continued to improve access to and quality of water. FAO established more than 1,200 community and household-level rainwater harvesting cisterns to improve water availability and water rationing through resource management. UNDP continued to support the development of the wastewater sector and regenerate natural reserves in Gaza.

67. UNRWA in Gaza completed the first phase of the Saudi Arabia rehousing project, which included 752 new shelters for families who lost their homes owing to the conflict.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

68. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process for the State of Palestine is seeking $401.6 million. This figure was increased from the $374.3 million requested in the initial published Consolidated Appeal Process document to take into account the additional needs in Gaza arising from the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel in November 2012. Humanitarian assistance under the Consolidated Appeal Process focuses on tackling entrenched levels of food insecurity, serious protection and human rights issues and the limited access of vulnerable Palestinian communities to essential services, particularly in Gaza, East Jerusalem, Area C of the West Bank and the seam zone. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process represents a reduction in requirements compared with the 2012 Process, which requested a revised amount of $419.9 million. To date, the 2012 Consolidated Appeal Process has received 71 per cent ($297.6 million) of its requested funds. In addition, the UNRWA Emergency Appeal is requesting $300 million to meet the needs of some 2 million Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank.

69. During and in the immediate aftermath of the November 2012 hostilities, the United Nations Mine Action Service undertook emergency risk assessments of all destroyed and damaged bridges, schools, family centres and key infrastructure

across Gaza and held risk-awareness campaigns concerning explosive remnants of war with partners. Between January and March 2013, the Mine Action Service supported demolitions of explosive remnants of war, destroying over 1,000 of them.

Emergency food support

70. UNRWA provided more than 21,865 individuals (3,163 households) with emergency food assistance in the West Bank. UNRWA and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued their joint assistance programme for refugee and non-refugee Bedouin herders in the West Bank, reaching at least 27,414 individuals (4,458 households) with four rounds of food rations during the reporting period.

71. In Gaza, UNRWA delivered an additional 526,382 emergency food aid parcels to nearly 140,000 refugee families, benefiting 748,040 abject or absolute poor individuals. UNRWA provided a total volume of 66,000 metric tons of staple food to the poorest refugees in 2012, including more than 48,000 metric tons of flour procured locally.

Emergency income generation

72. Across the West Bank and Gaza, the UNRWA job creation programme provided 29,991 refugees with job opportunities, creating 1.9 million job days of employment, injecting $26,875,625 into food-insecure/food-vulnerable households and reaching a total of 188,531 beneficiaries (hired workers and their families).

Emergency health support

73. WHO continued to monitor shortages of drugs and disposables, led efforts to fill gaps in supplies and assisted in coordinating the import of medical supplies donated to Gaza. It also provided spare parts and technical assistance to maintain, repair and improve existing equipment and procured medical supplies and equipment to meet essential needs in the public health system in Gaza. WHO and partners provided emergency supplies of critical drugs and disposables needed for treatment of the injured during the escalation in hostilities in Gaza in November 2012. In addition, UNICEF delivered 43 lifesaving paediatric drugs and consumables to cover the needs of Ministry of Health primary health-care facilities for three to six months. It also procured 30 types of essential drugs for a caseload of 15,000 sick children.

74. In the West Bank, UNRWA operated six mobile clinic teams, which served 55 of the most remote or vulnerable communities with essential primary health care. The teams provided an average of more than 12,000 patient consultations a month and covered a population of approximately 120,000 refugees as well as non-refugees. The clinics are closely coordinated with other mobile health-care providers, including the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations.

75. UNRWA provided community mental health-care support to 49 vulnerable Bedouin communities in the West Bank, covering a population of approximately 10,500 individuals. The teams provided individual and group counselling, family support, psychosocial activities for men, women and children, and facilitated training programmes for community leaders.

Emergency water and sanitation support

76. UNICEF supported water networks improvement, benefiting 300 families in underserved communities in the West Bank and resulting in decreased spending on water and increased access to water for 958 students.

77. In Gaza, in coordination with the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, UNICEF supported the installation of four desalination units expected to provide access to desalinated water to 35,000 people.

78. In partnership with the Italian non-governmental organization Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (Civil Volunteers' Group) and the French non-governmental organization Action contre la faim, UNICEF's installation of water storage tanks and mobile latrines benefited 2,531 families (161 in Area C and 2,370 in the Access Restricted Area of Gaza). Over 1,100 people in access restricted areas have increased awareness on hygiene practices and cleaning household tanks. Around 390 male and female teachers in the access restricted areas benefited from training of trainers and were able to reach 5,000 students with lessons on good hygiene practices.

79. UNICEF supported the provision of emergency fuel to run generators, wells and pumping stations, benefiting at least 800,000 people in Gaza. In response to the Gaza crisis, UNICEF supported the repairs of 161 damaged generators and the rehabilitation of the water and wastewater networks in Gaza, benefiting at least 189,000 people, including 95,000 children.

80. UNRWA supported solid waste removal in 9 camps, provided public water infrastructure repairs and upgrades in 10 refugee camps and ensured water quality testing was undertaken in all 19 camps in the West Bank.

81. UNRWA supported water and sanitation service providers operating outside refugee camps to procure sufficient quantities of fuel and other supplies in Gaza. Such interventions were critical owing to persisting electricity outages. In 2012, 581,593 litres of fuel were distributed to municipalities, Solid Waste Management Councils and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility to ensure the continuity of water and sanitation services and treat mosquito breeding sites.

Emergency agriculture support

82. FAO distributed more than 2,200 tons of animal fodder, drought-tolerant seeds and shrubs, seedlings and vaccines, benefiting roughly 2,200 herding families in 2012, in order to protect the livelihoods of Palestinian farmers.

83. FAO continued to monitor the vulnerability of small-scale farmers to economic, political, and climatic shocks and to support appropriate responses. It provided 20,000 vaccines to vaccinate all cattle in Gaza and 85 traps for plant disease to farmers. In addition, training was provided to 10 agronomists and 250 farmers in order to build their capacity in identifying and responding to animal and plant diseases.

Emergency education support

84. In response to the crisis in Gaza in November 2012, UNICEF continued to repair 94 damaged schools and provide learning materials. Mine risk education

materials were produced to raise the awareness of more than 273,000 children on unexploded ordnances through Government schools and community centres in Gaza.

85. UNICEF improved the learning environment for 53,000 children, including 20,929 girls, through the rehabilitation of 21 schools (7 in the West Bank and 14 in Gaza) and the provision of learning materials. Educational supplies were pre-positioned to respond to the needs of over 40,000 children. Over 3,000 children, including 1,434 girls, in the West Bank safely accessed school through UNICEF's support for the operation of school vehicles, including the provision of 12 new vehicles and protective accompaniment.

Emergency housing support

86. Between May 2012 and April 2013, UNRWA provided emergency assistance, including cash assistance, to 46 families (285 individuals) affected by house demolitions.

87. UNRWA provided assistance to refugees whose homes had been damaged or destroyed during the hostilities in November 2012. Over $1.7 million in cash assistance was provided to 2,735 families (16,685 direct beneficiaries) for self-help minor repairs. In addition, 171 families received transitional cash assistance (over $150,000) and will continue to receive this allowance designed to help families displaced from their homes. A total of 11 shelters were opened for a brief period of time.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

88. The United Nations maintained support to the Palestinian Authority's efforts to improve the collection of revenue and accelerate customs clearance procedures. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) renewed an ongoing collaboration with the Palestinian Customs Authority to modernize and strengthen its existing systems. UNCTAD initiated efforts to strengthen the economic modelling and forecasting capacity of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is now officially using UNCTAD's macroeconometric model for forecasting.

89. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) also continued its programme of support to enhance the operational capacity of the Palestinian Civil Police through training programmes, the provision of equipment, information management systems development and infrastructure development.

90. UN-Women and UNDP supported the adoption of the 2011-2019 National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women. UN-Women provided technical assistance to the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice to establish mechanisms and standards to expand access by women to justice and security sectors and protection services. UN-Women and UNDP worked with the Palestinian Civil Police and the Family Protection Units to develop their capacity in prevention and response to family violence and protection for victims.

91. ILO continued to support the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour through capacity-building programmes on occupational health and safety.

92. With ongoing support from UNICEF over the past few years, the amended Child Law was signed into force by President Abbas in December 2012; the amended law allows for additional protection to children and reinforces the legislative framework of front-line child protection professionals. A new law to protect children in conflict with the law and a child justice framework were also approved by the Cabinet. The "Policy of Nonviolence and Enhancing Discipline in Schools" was endorsed, with UNICEF support, overcoming significant challenges owing to the administrative divide between the West Bank and Gaza.

93. Support by the United Nations Mine Action Service to the Palestinian Authority included seeking modalities to begin the clearance of non-operational minefields in the West Bank. The Service contributed to the establishment of the Palestinian Mine Action Centre within the Ministry of the Interior, for which the Mine Action Service acts as technical advisor.

94. UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, assisted the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs in conducting capacity development activities for the staff of the Ministry and of the Gender Unit of 12 Palestinian ministries in legal literacy on international and national legal mechanisms to protect women's rights in the State of Palestine.

95. UN-Women provided technical support for the protection of women against violence and the monitoring of human rights violations by enhancing the capacity of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs in the adoption of international human rights standards. It also supported the establishment of an observatory on access to justice for women.

96. UN-Women provided technical support to various Palestinian ministries to ensure that gender was mainstreamed in budgets, development planning strategies and capacity-building activities to support monitoring, evaluation and reporting. UNDP also trained 314 local government staff in 15 districts on mainstreaming gender standards in district planning and budgeting.

D. Private sector development

97. UNRWA financed 14,500 loans valued at $21.03 million to Palestinian businesses and households in 2012. Women and young people received 35 per cent and 33 per cent of these loans respectively. The programme in the State of Palestine continued to run on an operationally self-sufficient and sustainable basis and earned a net income of $1 million from its microfinance operations.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

98. Under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process/United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, collaboration and coordination among the numerous donor and United Nations forums was strengthened during the reporting period. The humanitarian country team in Jerusalem and the Operational Coordination Group in Gaza met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. With the support of the Coordination Unit within UNSCO, the United Nations country team continued to coordinate its programming within the United

Nations Medium-Term Response Plan and began the development of the United Nations Development Action Framework in alignment with the Palestinian development priorities. Efforts to forge constructive partnerships among the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority and the broader aid community were strengthened. The United Nations continued preparation of Ad Hoc Liaison Committee reports on a biannual basis, strategies for East Jerusalem and Area C and, together with other humanitarian actors, the development of a Consolidated Appeal Process for humanitarian action.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

99. In 2012, the Palestinian Authority struggled to meet its financial obligations, since expenditures were higher than expected, revenue was less than projected, and external financing fell short of the budget target. This led the Palestinian Authority to accumulate approximately $578 million in arrears to the private sector, the pension system and civil servant wages and to increase its stock of debt to domestic banks to $1.4 billion by the end of 2012. The external financing requirement for 2013 is estimated at $1.4 billion. Timely donor support to bridge this gap, combined with the transparent and unhindered flow of clearance revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, will be essential to meeting financial obligations in the coming year.

Donor coordination

100. The local aid coordination structure continued to serve as a key forum for donors and the Palestinian Authority. The coordination of humanitarian assistance and advocacy continued to be led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat.

101. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held during the reporting period, in New York on 23 September 2012 and in Brussels on 19 March 2013.

V. Unmet needs

102. The 2012 Consolidated Appeal Process requested a revised amount of $419.9 million to tackle the most urgent humanitarian needs, of which 71 per cent was funded. Despite the generous response from donors, funding was uneven across clusters with some funds arriving late in the year, thereby affecting the delivery of some of the most urgent programmes. The 2013 Consolidated Appeal Process is currently requesting $401.6 million, of which 30 per cent was funded as at 4 April 2013 (including $8.2 million received from the Central Emergency Response Fund). Except for the education sector, which has not received any funds to date, funding levels across clusters and sectors is fairly even. However, over half of the funds received are still waiting to be allocated to specific clusters and sectors.

103. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a shortfall of $67.2 million for 2013, as well as its 2012 Emergency Appeal for $300 million, which has a $220 million shortfall.

104. United Nations agencies are seeking $1.6 billion to support planned multi-annual development interventions, including the reconstruction of Gaza, in the context of the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. This funding would complement the $1.2 billion of ongoing United Nations recovery and development projects in Gaza and the West Bank.

VI. Challenges

105. During the reporting period, restrictions on movement and access, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and associated displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have all increased. Furthermore, significant settlement activity continues to take place in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, heightening tension on the ground. Economic growth will require a revitalization of the private sector and a further easing of restrictions on movement and access.

106. The United Nations received approval for an estimated $77.4 million worth of United Nations projects by the Israeli authorities during the reporting period, including 449 housing units, 14 schools and 23 infrastructure and community development projects. This brings the total approved since March 2012 to $400 million. During this same period, $33 million worth of projects were rejected by Israeli authorities owing to the proposed location of the projects.

107. Continued and predictable support to the Palestinian Authority's budget is necessary to finance the current deficit and ensure stability of the ongoing reform efforts.

VII. Conclusions

108. The challenging operational context for the work of the United Nations in the reporting period remained unchanged, while threats to the livelihoods of Palestinians, particularly demolitions in Area C and the continued restrictions and divisions of Gaza, continue to pose formidable obstacles to development in the State of Palestine. Despite modest improvements, persistently high unemployment and food insecurity in Gaza, the rise in demolitions, the continued closure and restrictions on the movement of people and goods all hinder sustainable progress. The United Nations will continue working towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 2012/23, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of that resolution. The Assembly, in its resolution 67/229, also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its sixty-eighth session. The present report, which has been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, is submitted in compliance with the resolutions of the Assembly and the Council.

In the forty-sixth year of its occupation of Palestinian territory, Israel continued in its practices and policies that violate the occupying Power's obligations under international law. These discriminatory policies, which "amount to de facto segregation", adversely affect the living conditions of the Palestinian population, with a dire impact on various Palestinian social and economic sectors, as well as on the Palestinian natural resources and environment.

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** E/2013/100.

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Excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces continued. The ill-treatment of Palestinian child detainees appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized. Israel's frequent use of administrative detention amounts to a policy of widespread and systematic arbitrary detention. Israeli authorities and settlers commit transgressions against Palestinians and their property with impunity.

Since 1967, Israel has revoked the residency status of more than 260,000 Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, while Israeli policies and practices, including home demolitions, lead to the forced displacement of Palestinians. Settler violence also is aimed mainly to force Palestinians to move from their lands.

The scale of Israel's settlement project in the occupied territories, as well as the construction of the West Bank wall, are not only illegal but also appear to confirm Israel's intention to retain control over large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, thus violating a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by the use or threat of force.

Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory face daily obstacles and humiliation to travel both inside and outside the territory, while the Gaza blockade amounts to collective punishment, also illegal under international law.

The continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan similarly includes policies and practices that discriminate against its Syrian citizens and encourage illegal Israeli settlement therein.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia would like to acknowledge its appreciation for the substantive contributions and inputs of the Department for Political Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund and the League of Arab States.

I. Introduction

1. Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/23 and General Assembly resolution 67/229 expressed the concerns of the two bodies about the practices of Israel, the occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, which violate international humanitarian law. These practices included actions that caused death and injuries to civilians, including children, women and peaceful demonstrators, all of whom must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law, as well as the rising incidence of violence by illegal, armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and their properties, in addition to the continued detention of thousands of Palestinians, including children and women, under harsh conditions. Of concern also to the Council and the Assembly are the accelerated construction by Israel of settlements, the construction of the wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, the increased demolition of homes, economic institutions, agricultural lands and infrastructure, the revocation of residency rights of Palestinians in and around occupied East Jerusalem, and the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including what amounts to a blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Council and Assembly, through their aforementioned resolutions, also highlighted the detrimental impact of Israeli practices on the natural resources and the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

2. The present note highlights the practices by Israel, the occupying Power, that are of concern to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and that persisted over the reporting period. Although Israel cites security concerns to justify most of its policies and practices, the note indicates that many of these practices as well as the occupation regime constitute continuous violations of international law.

II. Occupied Palestinian Territory

Israeli policies affecting Palestinians

3. Israel implements policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that "amount to de facto segregation", including the establishment of two entirely separate Israeli legal systems and sets of institutions for Jewish communities grouped in illegal settlements, on the one hand, and Palestinian populations living under Israeli military occupation in towns and villages, on the other. Furthermore, Palestinians do not enjoy either equal use of roads and infrastructure or equal access to basic services and water resources. Such separation is concretized by the implementation of a complex combination of restrictions on movement, the existence of separate roads and a permit regime that only impacts the Palestinian population.[1] Moreover, a matrix of military orders applies, by law or by practice, only to Palestinians to regulate and control most aspects of daily life, including by restricting an extensive range of rights (A/HRC/22/63, para. 40).

[1] CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 24.

4. In June 1967 Israel formally, yet illegally, annexed 70 km^2 of land incorporating East Jerusalem and a number of nearby Palestinian villages into the expanded boundaries of the Jerusalem municipality of Israel (ibid., para. 25).

5. For decades Israel has pursued a strategy that has led to the debilitation of East Jerusalem in every respect, including socioeconomic.[2] Furthermore, Israel has employed the following policies and practices: physically isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank in part by building the wall; discrimination in planning and building; land expropriation and demolition of houses; revoking residency and social benefits of Palestinians; and inequitably disbursing the municipal budget between the two parts of the city (A/67/379, para. 16). The cumulative effects of these methods have led to the deterioration in the conditions of Palestinian East Jerusalemites.[3]

6. According to human rights organizations, since 2001, Israeli authorities have closed down at least 28 Palestinian organizations operating in Jerusalem that had been involved in educational, cultural and social activities for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.[4]

Planning and zoning

7. Area C constitutes over 60 per cent of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. As the only contiguous territory, it is the key to economic cohesion and is the most resource abundant space in the West Bank as it holds the majority of the territory's water, agricultural lands, natural resources and land reserves. Israel maintains full security control and control over building and planning in Area C. About 150,000 Palestinians live in 270 communities that are totally or partially in Area C.[5]

8. In Area C the zoning regime applied by Israel benefits the establishment and growth of settlements, while denying the development of Palestinian communities. This regime effectively allows Palestinian construction on 1 per cent of Area C. As a result, many Palestinians are left with no choice but to build without a permit, which leads to "inhumane Israeli responses involving demolition and displacement" (A/67/379, para. 15).

9. From 2005 to 2009, only 13 per cent of the Israeli building permits issued for housing units in East Jerusalem were granted to Palestinian neighbourhoods. In Jewish neighbourhoods, there is an average of 20 square metres of housing per resident, compared to 11 square metres in Palestinian neighbourhoods.[6]

Residency status

10. Since 1967, Israel has retained control over the residency status of the Palestinian population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, implementing discriminatory policies that often lead to the displacement of Palestinians.[7]

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[2] ACRI, Policies of Neglect in East Jerusalem, May 2012, p. 2.

[3] Ibid.; see paras. 86-95 below.

[4] A/67/372, para. 41; and The Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, submission to the United Nations.

[5] Information received from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

[6] ACRI, East Jerusalem in Numbers, http://www.acri.org.il/en/2012/05/16/east-jerusalem-in-numbers/.

[7] Information received from OCHA.

11. Up until the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, Israel revoked the residency status of 250,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in addition to 14,188 Palestinian East Jerusalemites whose residency permits were revoked from 1967 to 2011.[8]

12. Israel regulates the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem almost as if they were foreign nationals living in Israel, with little regard for their status as protected persons under international humanitarian law (A/67/372, para. 38). If they reside outside Israel or East Jerusalem for a period of seven years, Palestinian residents lose their permanent residency status, as stipulated in the Entry into Israel Regulations of 2003.[9]

13. Policies that apply only to Palestinian residents of Jerusalem include the Entry into Israel Law, which stipulates that a permanent resident who marries a non-resident must submit, on behalf of the spouse, a request for "family unification" in order for the partner to reside in East Jerusalem, a process that has frozen for almost 10 years the entry of those spouses from the West Bank and Gaza.[10]

Disproportionate use of force

14. Excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces, including the Israeli military and border police, continued in the West Bank. Most injuries occurred during demonstrations, where Israeli Military Order 101 outlaws "assemblies", and Israeli troops use excessive force to disperse them, thereby violating Palestinians' right to peaceful protest. Civilians were also injured and killed as a result of the excessive use of force during other forms of military operations, including search and arrest raids (see A/67/372, paras. 15-24).

15. Apart from air strikes and military operations, methods used by the Israeli military to enforce the access-restricted areas in the Gaza Strip, including the use of live ammunition, violate the international humanitarian law principle of distinction, which establishes that civilians are not to be targeted (see A/67/372, paras. 8-10).

16. From 30 March 2012 to 29 March 2013, 268 Palestinians were killed and 4,483 others were injured. The vast majority of casualties involved civilians and were inflicted by Israeli security forces. A total of 132 Palestinian injuries were the result of settler attacks. Among the casualties, 42 Palestinian children were killed and 615 were injured. During the same period, 3 Israeli civilians were killed and 279 were injured, including 3 injured children.[11]

17. On 14 November 2012, Israel launched a military offensive against the Gaza Strip that went on until 21 November, during which Palestinian militants also shelled Israeli towns and army posts in Israel. At least 165 Palestinians were killed by Israeli military action, of whom 99 were civilians, including 13 women and 33 children. An additional 1,399 Palestinians were injured, the majority of whom

[8] See *Ceased Residency*, http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates1175; information received from OCHA.

[9] Information received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); see also A/67/372, para. 38.

[10] Information received from OCHA.

[11] OCHA, Protection of Civilians: Casualties Database, http://www.ochaopt.org/poc.aspx?id=1010002; and OCHA Protection of Civilians Weekly Report, 19-25 March 2013; casualties include those who were injured or killed during the November 2012 offensive (see para. 17 below).

are believed to be civilians. During the offensive, 3 Israeli civilians were killed and 224 Israelis, most of whom were also civilians, were injured by Palestinian shelling. An additional six Palestinian civilians were killed by stray shells from Palestinian militants.[12]

18. A common denominator affecting all victims of unlawful acts of violence against Palestinians is the absence of effective investigations and redress for victims, leaving Israeli security apparatuses to enjoy significant impunity vis-à-vis such acts of violence against Palestinians.[13]

Arbitrary arrests and detentions

19. According to official Israeli figures, at the end of February 2013, about 4,713 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were held in Israeli prisons, including 253 children.[14]

20. In addition to the denial of due process rights during trial and the conviction of Palestinian detainees in the Israeli military court system,[15] it has been reported that considerable physical and psychological pressure to sign confessions is placed on defendants during interrogations. Practices in this regard include beatings and threats, sleep deprivation, position abuse, prolonged cuffing, having family members threatened and, in some cases, arrested.[16] Some of such cases amount to torture (see A/67/550, para. 17).

21. On 24 February 2013, a Palestinian prisoner, Arafat Jaradat, lost his life during his incarceration in an Israeli prison, sparking wide protests across the West Bank amidst allegations that torture and ill-treatment caused his death. On 2 April 2013, another Palestinian prisoner, Maysara Abu Hamdiyeh, died while incarcerated in an Israeli prison from cancer amidst accusations of medical negligence and ill-treatment.[17] The Palestinian Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (ADDAMEER) maintains that since 1967, a total of 72 Palestinian prisoners have died under torture and 53 have died owing to medical neglect.[18]

22. Although the Israeli military issued an order raising the age of majority for Palestinians to 18 for security-related matters, children are not treated in a manner that takes into account their age, needs and special circumstances.[19] To the contrary, the ill-treatment of Palestinian children who are arrested, detained or prosecuted by the Israeli military system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized.[20]

23. Sixty per cent of all detentions of Palestinian children by Israeli security forces occur between midnight and 5 a.m. Eighty-seven per cent of Palestinian children in

[12] Information provided by OCHA.
[13] Information provided by OCHA.
[14] Btselem, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners, and http://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody.
[15] Information provided by OCHA; see also the concerns raised in the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (A/HRC/14/26/Add.1).
[16] Information provided by OCHA.
[17] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/02/palestinian-prisoners-israel-hunger-strike.
[18] ADDAMEER, http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=578.
[19] Information provided by OCHA.
[20] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Children in Israeli Military Detention*, February 2013, p. 1.

detention are denied bail and thus remain detained until the conclusion of a legal process. Ninety per cent plead guilty in order to avoid extended pretrial detention. Israel uses solitary confinement for 12 per cent of Palestinian child detainees (see A/67/550, paras. 10-12).

24. Israel's treatment of Palestinian child detainees is grossly inconsistent with the treatment it affords the children of Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This discrimination includes the minimum age of the child to receive a custodial sentence or an adult sentence; the right to have a parent present during interrogation; having interrogations recorded audiovisually; the time limit for being held in custody before being brought before a judge; having access to a lawyer and without charges being brought; and the maximum period of time between charges and a trial (see A/67/550, para. 16). UNICEF reports that: "In no other country are children systematically tried by juvenile military courts that, by definition, fall short of providing the necessary guarantees to ensure respect for their rights".[21]

Administrative detention

25. Israel's frequent use of administrative detention amounts to a policy of widespread and systematic arbitrary detention (A/67/550, para. 20). One of the most problematic issues with such detention is that in most cases, evidence on which the detention order is based is kept secret and neither the detainee nor his or her counsel has access to it (see A/67/372, paras. 26-27). By the end of February 2013, 169 Palestinians remained under administrative detention, which constitutes a decline from the number of administrative detainees in 2012.[22]

26. Throughout 2012, more than 1,200 Palestinian prisoners reportedly participated in a series of hunger strikes to protest their conditions of detention and treatment by Israeli authorities, including the widespread use of administrative detention.[23]

Population displacement, property destruction and confiscation

27. Israeli military operations have been the main cause of forced displacement in the Gaza Strip. The November 2012 offensive led to the displacement of an additional 3,000 Palestinians whose homes had been destroyed or severely damaged.[24]

28. In 2012 the Israeli authorities demolished 540 Palestinian structures in Area C in the West Bank, including 165 homes. This resulted in the displacement of 815 people, including 474 children.[25] In January 2013 alone at least 139 structures, including 59 homes and other residential structures, were destroyed in 20 separate incidents.[26]

29. In a number of cases, emergency shelters and other items provided as a form of emergency response have similarly been demolished and/or confiscated by Israeli authorities.[27]

[21] UNICEF, *Children in Israeli Military Detention*, February 2013, p. 1.
[22] Btselem, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners.
[23] A/HRC/21/33/AUV, para. 19.
[24] Information received from OCHA.
[25] Information received from OCHA.
[26] OCHA, Humanitarian Monitor Monthly Report, January 2013, p. 14.
[27] Information received from OCHA.

30. During 2012, the Israeli authorities demolished 64 Palestinian structures in East Jerusalem comprising 24 residential structures and 40 others, including livelihood and animal structures, and 15 "self-demolitions" imposed by these authorities.[28]

31. Overall, there are at least 93,100 residents of East Jerusalem who live in structures built without permits and are therefore at potential risk of displacement.[29]

32. The forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes by settlers, backed by the Government, is in itself incompatible with international human rights law (see A/67/372, para. 31) and has contributed to changing the demography of East Jerusalem. The Government of Israel supports the settlers' actions by sending security forces to accompany the takeover of Palestinian homes (A/67/379, para. 16).

33. In July 2011 Israeli authorities indicated their intention to "relocate" approximately 27,000 Bedouin and herding Palestinians living in Area C. Should this plan be implemented, it would amount to individual and mass forcible transfers and forced evictions contrary to Israel's obligations under international law (A/67/372, para. 37).

34. Since the beginning of the occupation, Israel has seized over 1 million dunums[30] of Palestinian land (approximately 40 per cent of the West Bank) and placed it within the jurisdictional boundaries of local and regional settlement councils, prohibiting Palestinian access to that land (A/HRC/22/63, paras. 63-64).

Settlements and settler violence

35. The establishment of the settlements on occupied territories is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Convention IV of 1907. In building settlements and associated infrastructure, Israel further violates international law through the appropriation of Palestinian property not justified by military necessity (see A/67/379, paras. 11-12).

36. Israel defined settlements as "national priority areas", whose residents benefit from housing and education subsidies and direct incentives (A/HRC/22/63, para. 22). This amounts to the transfer by Israel of its population into the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see A/67/375, para. 10), which is prohibited under international law.[31]

37. The scale of Israel's settlement project and the massive financial investment in it appear to confirm Israel's intention to retain control over these areas, thus violating a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by the use or threat of force (see A/67/379, para. 12).

38. At present there are about 150 settlements together with approximately 100 unauthorized outposts.[32] The number of settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory stood at 536,932 in 2011, including 267,643 in East Jerusalem.[33] The

[28] http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_Jerusalem_FactSheet_December_2012_english.pdf.

[29] See paras. 7-9 above; see also OCHA Fact Sheet, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns Update*, December 2012, at http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_Jerusalem_FactSheet_December_2012_english.pdf.

[30] 1 dunum = 1,000 m^2.

[31] A/HRC/22/63, para. 38; Fourth Geneva Convention, article 49.

[32] Information provided by OCHA.

[33] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/settlmt2011E.pdf.

settler population (excluding that of East Jerusalem) has grown over the past decade at an average yearly rate of 5.3 per cent, compared with 1.8 per cent for the Israeli population as a whole. Israeli settlers now represent approximately 19 per cent of the overall population of the West Bank (see A/67/375, paras. 7 and 12).

39. On 30 November 2012, the day after the General Assembly accorded Palestine non-member Observer State status in the United Nations, the Government of Israel announced the advancement of the E1 settlement plan, comprising several thousand housing units.[34] This plan, if implemented, would completely sever East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and compromise the territorial contiguity between the northern and southern parts thereof.[35]

Settler violence

40. As the occupying Power, Israel has the obligation to protect the right to life and physical integrity of Palestinians.[36] Yet, various aspects of Palestinian life are significantly affected by a minority of settlers who are engaged in violence and intimidation with the aim of forcing Palestinians off their land (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 50).

41. There has been an increase in "racist violence and acts of vandalism on the part of Jewish settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory targeting non-Jews, including Muslims and Christians and their holy places", with impunity.[37]

42. Since 2008, Israeli settlers committed at least nine arson attacks against Palestinian mosques and 21 incidents where graffiti was used to desecrate mosques, churches and burial grounds (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 60).

43. In 2012 355 settler violence incidents were recorded, resulting in injuries to 169 Palestinians, in addition to 240 incidents resulting in damage to Palestinian private property.[38] Israeli security forces have, in numerous instances, failed to protect Palestinians from acts of violence committed by Israeli settlers, even when those acts occurred in their presence. Instead, in a number of documented cases, the Israeli military focused on dispersing Palestinians (see A/67/375, para. 19).

44. From March 2012 to January 2013, a total of 5,832 trees were destroyed or uprooted by settlers.[39]

45. Settler violence continues with a culture of impunity.[40] Of 162 Israeli-monitored police investigations of cases of vandalism of Palestinian-owned trees in the West Bank since 2005, only 1 resulted in an indictment.[41]

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[34] Information provided by OCHA.

[35] Btselem, http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20121202_e1_human_rights_ramifications.

[36] See A/67/375, paras. 30-35; see also article 43 of the Hague Regulations annexed to the Fourth Geneva Convention, respecting the laws and customs of war on land, of 18 October 1907.

[37] See CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 28.

[38] Information provided by OCHA.

[39] Information received from United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

[40] Information received from OCHA.

[41] Yesh Din, Police investigations of Palestinian tree vandalization in the West Bank, October 2012.

West Bank wall

46. In combination with the gate and permit regimes, the wall continues to be the single largest obstacle to Palestinian movement within the occupied West Bank.[42] The International Court of Justice concluded in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, that "the wall and its associated regime are contrary to international law" and that Israel is obligated to cease construction of and dismantle the wall and to make reparations for damages caused by the construction of this 708 km wall (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1). Israel has yet to comply with the advisory opinion.

47. Israel cites security reasons for the construction of the wall, even though most of its planned route runs within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, not along the Green Line. In addition, the wall's route shows that its aim was to encircle as many Israeli settlements as possible, so as to enable de facto annexation to Israel of lands that lie to the Israeli side of the wall.[43]

48. These lands constitute 9.4 per cent of the territory of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and some of the most fertile land (238 km^2 of agricultural land)[44] of the West Bank.[45] About 21 per cent, 31 per cent and 13.1 per cent of the grasslands, forests and shrub lands, respectively, will also be annexed behind the wall upon its completion under the planned route.[46]

49. Palestinians aged 16 and above require "permanent resident" permits from the Israeli authorities to continue to live in their homes if located in the seam zone,[47] while Israelis and foreign visitors have unrestricted access (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 40).

50. To enable the construction of the wall, the Israeli army issued military orders for the expropriation of 30,261 dunums of land, 88 per cent of which (i.e. 26,622 dunums) are "private lands belonging to Palestinian residents".[48] In addition, the wall has resulted in the uprooting of 8.4 km^2 of olive groves and orchards.[49]

51. Thousands of Palestinian farmers whose lands lie in this zone also need to obtain hard to get permits from the Israeli authorities to have access to and work their own land. Farmers also may not be able to obtain permits for workers to carry out agricultural work and are not allowed to store equipment on their land in the seam zone.[50]

52. Herders in most cases are not allowed to bring livestock across the wall for grazing, thus about 90 per cent of the directly affected communities report that the wall had led to a decrease in their livestock numbers.[51]

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[42] Information received from OHCHR; see A/67/372, para. 44.
[43] Btselem, Arrested development: the long-term impact of the separation barrier, October 2012, p. 4.
[44] Information provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
[45] Btselem, Arrested development: the long-term impact of the separation barrier, October 2012, p. 13.
[46] Information provided by UNEP.
[47] Information received from OCHA; the seam zone is the West Bank area that lies between the wall and the 1967 armistice Green Line.
[48] Btselem, Arrested development: the long-term impact of the separation barrier, October 2012, p. 14.
[49] Information received from UNEP.
[50] See UNCTAD document TD/B/59/2.
[51] Information provided by UNRWA.

Closure policies and mobility restrictions

53. Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory face daily obstacles and humiliation to travel both inside and outside the territory as a result of the wall, military checkpoints permit requirements and travel bans by Israel (see A/HRC/20/17/Add.2, paras. 61-63).

Blockade of the Gaza Strip

54. Israel continues to maintain the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip since June 2007.[52] However, despite cited Israeli security concerns and relaxations introduced in its provisions in 2010 and 2012, this blockade amounts to collective punishment[53] and has "locked in" over 1.6 million people in what is one of the most densely populated areas on Earth. It has also led to the "de-development" of Gaza, with degrading living conditions.[54]

55. The movement of people from Gaza through the Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing is prohibited, apart from exceptional situations. In 2012 there was an improvement in the transfer of patients from Gaza via the crossing. During the same period, an average of fewer than 200 permitted Palestinians and international persons passed through the crossing each day, compared to an average of 26,000 per day in 2000.[55] At the same time, Israel generally prohibited entry into Gaza of Arab Christian clergy, including bishops and other senior clergy, to visit congregations or ministries under their pastoral authority.[56]

56. The Israeli military has gradually expanded restrictions on access to farmland on the Gaza side of the 1949 Green Line, and to fishing areas along the Gaza Strip coast. Overall, the restricted land area was estimated to encompass 17 per cent of the total land mass of the Gaza Strip and 35 per cent of its agricultural land. At sea, fishermen have been prevented from accessing some 85 per cent of the maritime areas to which they were entitled in accordance with the Oslo Agreements,[57] resulting in an 80 per cent decline in the overall catch.[58]

57. Since the end of the November 2012 military offensive, improved access to fishing and farming areas was recorded, without any significant easing of restrictions on the movement of people and goods through the Israeli-controlled crossings.[59]

Mobility restrictions within the West Bank

58. The application of access restrictions is discriminatory, targeting mostly Palestinian residents, for the benefit of the Israeli settler population.[60]

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[52] A partial blockade was imposed on Gaza Strip in June 2006.

[53] Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, 13 June 2012, at http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/USG%20Valerie%20Amos%20Statement%20on%20Gaza%2013Jun12.pdf.

[54] Information received from OCHA.

[55] Information received from OCHA.

[56] United States Department of State, International religious freedom report for 2011, at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=192889#wrapper.

[57] Information provided by OCHA.

[58] See A/HRC/21/33/AUV, para. 16.

[59] Information provided by OCHA.

[60] Information provided by OCHA; see also A/HRC/22/63, paras. 72-76.

59. In 2012 the number of obstacles (e.g. checkpoints, flying checkpoints, earth mounds, concrete blocks and ditches), witnessed a slight increase, from 529 to 542. In spite of a number of measures to ease access, 180,000 Palestinians in 55 communities are still compelled to use detours that are two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city.[61]

60. Movement within the Israeli-controlled part of Hebron City, H2, also remained severely restricted, with Palestinian traffic banned from using most of the roads leading to the Israeli settlements and pedestrian movement also prohibited in other areas, including parts of what was once the main commercial artery.[62]

61. The Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area covers about 30 per cent of the West Bank and is home to nearly 60,000 Palestinians and about 9,500 Israeli settlers. Although there was improvement in Palestinian access to the Jordan Valley during 2012, it remains one of the areas most severely affected by the access restrictions imposed since 2000 and continues to be separated from the rest of the West Bank by dozens of physical obstacles.[63]

62. On 12 November 2012, the Israeli military issued "closed military zone" orders prohibiting anyone apart from residents from entering or approaching the villages of Bil'in, Ni'lin, Nabi Salah and Kafr Quddum on Fridays until March 2013. These are all villages in which weekly demonstrations have been held — and violently dispersed by security forces — regularly on Fridays for the past several years.[64]

63. About 40 per cent of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, has been allocated to 135 settlements, with their municipal boundaries being designated as closed military zones into which the entry of Palestinians is restricted. In other cases, access by Palestinians to agricultural land in the vicinity of settlements has been limited by means of systematic intimidation by Israeli settlers. For the last few years, access to Palestinian private land within the settlements' outer limits has been subject to "prior coordination" with the Israeli authorities, even in cases where the fencing-off of Palestinian private land was carried out independently by Israeli settlers.[65]

64. Approximately 18 per cent of the West Bank has been designated by Israel as a closed military zone for training, or a "firing zone". The presence of Palestinians is formally prohibited in these zones without permission from the Israeli authorities, which is rarely granted. Many residents report that there is in practice little or no military training in their areas.[66]

65. Palestinians, who reside within firing zones, are mainly those who did so prior to the designation of the area as "closed". They face a range of other difficulties, including the confiscation and demolition of property, settler violence, harassment by soldiers, access and movement restrictions, and/or water scarcity. This is in contrast to Israeli settlement outposts established in the firing zones that do not normally face such measures.[67]

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[61] Information received from OCHA.
[62] Information received from OCHA.
[63] Information received from OCHA.
[64] ACRI, http://www.acri.org.il/en/2012/11/13/closed-military-zone-orders-delivered-to-activists/.
[65] Information received from OCHA.
[66] Information received from OCHA.
[67] Information received from OCHA.

66. Humanitarian organizations reported around 535 access incidents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2012.[68] UNRWA alone reported a total of 235 such incidents involving its staff in 2012, affecting teachers, medical doctors and nurses, social and relief workers and field office staff. Moreover, access to seam zone areas for mobile health, food assistance, mental health services and social work teams was further restricted.[69]

67. Israeli restrictions hinder the ability of Palestinian Muslims and Christians to reach some places of worship and to practice their religious rites, particularly in Jerusalem. The wall also significantly impeded Bethlehem-area Christians from reaching the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and made visits to Christian sites in Bethany and Bethlehem difficult for Palestinian Christians who live on the Jerusalem side of the wall. Furthermore, foreign pilgrims and religious aid workers occasionally experienced difficulty obtaining access to Christian holy sites in the West Bank because of Israeli restrictions on movement in the West Bank. Israel's permitting regime also generally restricted most West Bank Muslims from accessing the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount.[70]

Access to East Jerusalem

68. Despite an easing of access restrictions for West Bank Palestinians to East Jerusalem, particularly during the month of Ramadan in 2012, such access continued to be restricted to permit holders who could only cross on foot using 4 of the 16 checkpoints functioning along the wall. The remaining 12 checkpoints are used by Israelis, international persons and Palestinians holding Jerusalem identification cards.[71]

69. Approximately 55,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites who reside on the West Bank side of the wall need to cross checkpoints to have access to health, education and other services in the heart of the city, to which they are entitled as residents of Jerusalem.[72]

Exploitation, endangerment and depletion of Palestinian natural resources

70. Israel controls almost all Palestinian water resources and exploits around 89 per cent of the available water, leaving only 11 per cent to the Palestinians.[73] Recent figures indicate a per capita consumption at below 70 litres per day for Palestinians in the West Bank, while Israelis living in illegal settlements enjoy access of up to 450 litres per day.[74]

71. Wells and springs that are available to Palestinians are generally degraded, as the Israeli authorities deny Palestinians permits for installing, upgrading or protecting

[68] OCHA, Access incidents of humanitarian organizations database, http://www.ochaopt.org/dbs/acis/index.aspx?id=1010005.
[69] Information provided by UNRWA.
[70] United States Department of State, International religious freedom report for 2011, at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=192889#wrapper.
[71] Information provided by OCHA.
[72] Information provided by OCHA.
[73] Information provided by UNEP.
[74] Information provided by UNEP.

their water sources to provide sufficient quantities, while they simultaneously continue to drill deeper and more efficient wells for Israeli use.[75]

72. Furthermore, the construction of the West Bank wall has damaged, destroyed or made inaccessible vital sources of water, such as wells, cisterns and springs, which, once damaged, can rarely be repaired or replaced owing to planning restrictions.[76]

73. In addition, Palestinians are denied access to what are supposed to be shared water resources, such as the Jordan River.[77]

74. The targeting of water sanitation and hygiene facilities by the Israeli authorities, including basic systems and facilities funded by international donors, was increased in 2012. In the first nine months of 2012, 33 water infrastructure facilities and 16 sanitation infrastructure facilities were demolished, affecting over 1,500 persons.[78]

75. The increased pressure on available water resources, combined with the blockade and continued Israeli military strikes, has damaged water resources, exacerbating the water crisis in the Gaza Strip.[79]

76. Palestinians in Gaza have resorted to overextraction from the coastal aquifer.[80] This has caused the water table to drop below sea level and saline water and other pollutants to intrude, rendering 90 to 95 per cent of the water unfit for human consumption.[81]

77. The four wastewater treatment plants in the Gaza Strip have limited treatment capacity and efficiency.[82] As a result, about 89 million litres of untreated or partially treated sewage are discharged directly into the sea every day, posing a potentially serious health and sanitation hazard.[83]

78. The sanitation crisis is further compounded by approximately 40,000 cesspits in use in Gaza, of which 84 per cent are manually emptied by household members owing to the lack of connections to the sewage network.[84] In 2012 alone, three children drowned in pools of open sewage that cannot be adequately addressed as long as the blockade hinders sanitation development.[85]

79. In the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, only 31 per cent of Palestinians are connected to the sewage network. Only one wastewater treatment plant is operational owing to the Israeli authorities' refusal to grant the necessary permits for the development of sanitation and wastewater treatment infrastructure. As a result, almost 40 to 50 million cubic metres of sewage each year reach natural drainages as untreated sewage.[86]

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[75] Information provided by OCHA.
[76] Information provided by UNEP.
[77] Information provided by UNEP.
[78] Information provided by OCHA.
[79] Information provided by UNEP.
[80] Information provided by UNEP.
[81] Information provided by UNEP.
[82] Information provided by UNEP.
[83] Information provided by OCHA.
[84] Information provided by OCHA.
[85] See Save the Children-Medical Aid for Palestinians, Gaza's children: falling behind, 2012, p. 3.
[86] Information provided by OCHA.

80. Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, generate 54 million cubic metres of domestic wastewater annually, with much of it entering the environment untreated.[87]

81. Apart from wastewater, solid waste from the settlements is dumped without restriction on Palestinian lands, fields and side roads, or is burned. Several polluting industries were relocated from Israel to the West Bank, including aluminium, tanning, plastics and electroplating, and do not abide by any environmental laws. The industrial waste produced by these industries and other Israeli industries located in the West Bank is disposed of on the nearby Palestinian agricultural lands, thereby constituting a threat to the environment.[88]

82. The wall also obstructs the flow of surface water, with trapped water causing flooding and the degradation of adjacent agricultural lands,[89] especially since Palestinians are not permitted to approach and clear the blockages in drainage pipes under the wall.[90]

83. The construction of the wall has caused physical separation as well as compaction of the soil, uprooting of trees and loss of agricultural land. The uprooting of trees leaves soils exposed and exacerbates land degradation.[91]

84. Farmers have been compelled to leave their lands barren because of the wall, losing a valuable source of reliable income and exposing the soil to erosion. Access difficulties also resulted in the overexploitation of remaining community lands, which also led to increased degradation.[92]

85. The construction of the wall has also altered and destroyed the natural habitats of a number of species, threatening biodiversity and depleting ecosystems. Common floral and faunal species are under serious threat of becoming rare, with some very rare species potentially disappearing altogether. About 22 terrestrial animal species are also under the threat of extinction, as the wall negatively impacted habitat fragmentation and prevented the movement of mammals for food and mating.[93]

Economic and social conditions

Economy

86. The economic growth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip continues to be unsustainable and restrained by the policies of the Israeli occupation, namely persistent restrictions on movement and access.

87. Reflecting the slowdown in economic activity, unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza remained stubbornly high and rose to 22.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012 from 21 per cent during the same period in 2011.[94] This indicates that labour-

[87] Information provided by UNEP.
[88] Information provided by UNEP.
[89] Information provided by UNEP.
[90] UNRWA-Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), Barrier impacts on the environment and rural livelihoods, 2012, at http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012062812240.pdf.
[91] UNRWA-ARIJ, Barrier impacts on the environment and rural livelihoods, 2012, at http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012062812240.pdf.
[92] UNRWA-ARIJ, Barrier impacts on the environment and rural livelihoods, 2012, at http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012062812240.pdf.
[93] Information provided by UNEP.
[94] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Labour Force Survey, February 2013, p. 36.

intensive tradable sectors are excessively and disproportionately impacted by Israeli occupation policies.[95] One issue of concern is the duration of unemployment with adverse effects, including diminished employability and significant forgone income. The average duration of unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza is 11 months (6.6 months in the West Bank and 16.1 months in the Gaza Strip in 2012.[96]

88. Unemployment has been much higher in Gaza (averaging 33.5 per cent in 2010 and 2011) than in the West Bank (17 per cent in 2010 and 2011). By the end of 2012 (fourth quarter), this pattern persisted: the West Bank unemployment rate was 18.3 per cent, while it stood at 32.2 per cent in Gaza.[97]

89. The persistence of high unemployment in the West Bank can be attributed, among other things, to low levels of private sector investment, particularly in Area C, which covers 60 per cent of the West Bank, where investment is highly restricted.[98]

90. Overall wage growth lagged behind inflation, leaving 2011 average real wages 8.4 per cent lower than their level five years earlier.[99] Real wages have fallen over the past decade at all education levels. For example, among those with five years of schooling, real wages were about 30 per cent lower in 2009 compared to 1999 and among those with 16 to 18 years of schooling, wages in 2009 were lower by 10 per cent.[100]

91. In 2011 slightly more than one of four (25.8 per cent) individuals in the West Bank and Gaza were living below the poverty line (17.8 per cent in the West Bank and 38.8 per cent in the Gaza Strip). Similarly, about 12.9 per cent of individuals were living below the deep poverty line in 2011 (7.8 per cent in the West Bank and 21.1 per cent in the Gaza Strip).[101]

92. One significant feature of poverty in the West Bank and Gaza is that many Palestinians have consumption levels that are just above the poverty line, implying that in the event of an economic shock they could easily fall below the poverty line.[102]

93. Seventy-eight per cent of Palestinians living in the Jerusalem district and 84 per cent of children live below the poverty line — the worst rates on record.[103] In addition, 2011 data indicates that 40 per cent of the male Arab population and 85 per cent of Palestinian women in Jerusalem do not participate in the labour market, and more than 5,000 Palestinian businesses in Jerusalem have closed their doors since 1999.[104]

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[95] See International Monetary Fund (IMF), Recent experience and prospects of the economy of the West Bank and Gaza, 19 March 2013.

[96] PCBS, Labour Force Survey, February 2013, p. 20.

[97] PCBS, Labour Force Survey, February 2013, pp. 37-38.

[98] See IMF, Recent experience and prospects of the economy of the West Bank and Gaza, 23 September 2012.

[99] See UNCTAD, TD/B/59/20.

[100] See World Bank, *Towards Economic Sustainability of a Future Palestinian State: Promoting Private Sector-Lead Growth*, April 2012.

[101] See PCBS, Levels of living and poverty in the Palestinian territory, June 2012.

[102] See World Bank, *Coping with Conflict? Poverty and Inclusion in the West Bank and Gaza*, 2011.

[103] See ACRI, East Jerusalem in Numbers, at http://www.acri.org.il/en/2012/05/16/east-jerusalem-in-numbers/.

[104] See ACRI, Policies of N[illegible]ct in East Jerusalem, May 2012.

94. The withholding and redirection by Israel of tax revenues it collects on behalf of the Government of Palestine, and the decline in donor support observed in 2011 and 2012 had a negative impact on growth and exacerbated a deep fiscal crisis. In November and December 2012 Israel temporarily withheld Palestinian tax revenues as a punitive step in light of the November vote admitting Palestine as a non-member Observer State to the General Assembly. This led to the delay of the payment of salaries to civil servants, who have embarked on strikes in protest since mid-December 2012.[105]

95. The key long-term constraints blocking the emergence of a strong economy are the loss of Palestinian natural resources, land and water to occupation and settlements, and the isolation of Palestinian producers from regional and global markets, leading to their limited ability to procure production inputs and to export their goods and services.[106]

Food security

96. FAO maintains that while food security levels have improved throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, these gains are uneven and temporary in nature.[107]

97. More than 40 per cent of Palestinian households are classified as food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. After assistance, 1.3 million Palestinians (27 per cent of Palestinian households) are food insecure and unable to meet their basic food and household expenses.[108]

98. In the West Bank, post-assistance food insecurity still reaches 17 per cent, while these rates in the Gaza Strip reach up to 44 per cent.[109]

99. In the Gaza Strip, UNRWA distributes food to over 700,000 refugees. Without improvements in the economy, which can only come about with the lifting of the blockade, that figure could rise to over 900,000.[110] The World Food Programme distributes food aid to an additional 300,000 persons.[111] Even so, about 44 per cent of recipients of food assistance remain food insecure.[112]

Public health

100. The continuing occupation of Palestinian territory hinders national health planning and the ability to implement health programmes. It leads many highly qualified doctors and other health personnel to leave the country, causing shortages in many specialties.[113]

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[105] See Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), Briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, 23 January 2013.
[106] See UNCTAD, TD/B/59/2, para. 5.
[107] Information received from FAO.
[108] Information received from FAO.
[109] Information received from FAO.
[110] Information received from UNRWA.
[111] Information received from UNSCO.
[112] See United Nations country team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Gaza in 2020: a liveable place?, August 2012, p. 6.
[113] Information received from WHO.

101. In addition, the blockade of the Gaza Strip has adversely affected the training and movement of health professionals into Gaza, and restricted the construction and rehabilitation of health infrastructure.[114]

102. Patients from Gaza have to apply for Israeli permits in order to access hospital treatment outside Gaza. In spite of some easing of the restriction, two female patients died in 2012 after being delayed in accessing medical treatment. Other patients and/or patient-companions were detained at the Beit Hanoun border between Gaza and Israel while crossing with a valid permit.[115]

103. Before and during the November 2012 offensive, more than 40 per cent of the drug items in the essential drug list and more than 50 per cent of medical consumables were out of stock. Hospitals had difficulty coping with the shortages. Some hospitals reported reuse of single use supplies, as well as the use of alternative and less effective antibiotics when the drug of choice was not available.[116]

104. Also during the November 2012 offensive, 13 primary health care centres and 2 hospitals were partially damaged, whereas a field hospital sustained serious damage after being directly hit. In addition, three ambulance drivers were injured and six ambulances were damaged owing to the shelling.[117]

105. After the November offensive, high rates of psychosocial trauma were reported in Gaza, particularly among children and young people. The number of people receiving assistance in UNRWA health centres related to psychological trauma doubled from November to December, with 42 per cent of those being children under the age of nine.[118] As a conservative estimate, it is reasonable to assume that 25,000 to 50,000 people will need some form of psychological intervention to address the long-term effects of the offensive.[119]

106. In the West Bank, UNRWA reported a continued demand for mental health services during 2012, in connection with stress-related disorders. The demand can be directly linked to protection concerns related to the occupation, including violence, the wall, forced displacement and subsequent socioeconomic hardship.[120] Psychological studies of Palestinian children 12 years of age and under show a disturbingly high correlation between witnessing a parent beaten or humiliated by Israeli soldiers and the loss by the child of the will to live (see A/HRC/20/32, para. 8).

107. Moreover, 58.6 per cent of school children, 68.1 per cent of children (between 9 and 12 months of age) and 36.8 per cent of pregnant women suffer from anaemia. Stunting, or long-term exposure to chronic malnutrition, affects 10 per cent of children under five years of age in the Gaza Strip.[121] It is also estimated that 50 per cent of infants and young children under two years of age in the West Bank and the

[114] Information received from WHO.
[115] Information received from WHO.
[116] See WHO, Initial health assessment report — Gaza Strip, December 2012.
[117] See WHO, Initial health assessment report — Gaza Strip, December 2012.
[118] Information received from UNRWA.
[119] See WHO, Initial health assessment report — Gaza Strip, December 2012.
[120] Information received from UNRWA.
[121] See Save the Children-Medical Aid for Palestinians, Gaza's children: falling behind, 2012, p. 2.

Gaza Strip suffer from iron deficiency anaemia, which is associated with inappropriate feeding practices.[122]

Education

108. In the Gaza Strip, it is estimated that 250 new schools are now needed, including 100 UNRWA schools, and an additional 190 schools will be needed by 2020, to accommodate the increase in the student population.[123] Currently, more than 87 per cent of UNRWA schools in Gaza operate on a double shift basis. In some cases, shipping containers have been utilized as classrooms.[124]

109. During the November offensive, 286 educational facilities, including schools, kindergartens and tertiary education institutions, suffered damage or destruction, affecting at least 249,067 students.[125]

110. In the West Bank, the restrictive planning regime results in inadequate or a significant shortage of school infrastructure and exposes schools to the threat of demolition. Currently, at least 38 schools serving approximately 3,000 children in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem have been issued verbal and written stop-work or demolition orders by the Israeli authorities, meaning they are under constant threat of demolition. Access to school can be hindered by physical obstacles, threats and harassment by the Israeli army and settlers.[126]

111. The East Jerusalem school system, which operates under the Israel Ministry of Education and the municipality's Jerusalem Education Administration, suffers from severe neglect, disproportionately low budget allocations, overcrowding, the lack of available classrooms and many other woes.[127]

III. Occupied Syrian Golan

112. Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Golan Heights in its resolution 497 (1981) the Security Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect (A/67/375, para. 45).

113. Approximately 19,000 Israelis have settled in 33 Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. That figure nearly equals the number of Syrians who live in the occupied Syrian Golan (ibid.).

114. Israel persists in implementing legal and administrative measures to provide socioeconomic incentives, security, infrastructure and social services to settlers residing in the occupied Syrian Golan, which amounts to the illegal transfer of its population into occupied territory (ibid.), whereas the five remaining Syrian villages of the occupied Syrian Golan are deprived of physical space for organic growth. In the village of Majdal Shams, approximately 11,000 Syrian citizens live in 1,200 houses. As new construction is not authorized, houses are either renovated or

[122] WHO, A/65/27/Rev.1, para. 4.
[123] See United Nations country team, Gaza in 2020: a liveable place?, August 2012.
[124] Information provided by UNRWA.
[125] Information provided by OCHA.
[126] Information provided by OCHA.
[127] See ACRI, Policies of Neglect in East Jerusalem, May 2012.

new floors are added, without the requisite permits, to accommodate the growth of these households.[128]

115. Syrian residents of the occupied Syrian Golan suffer from inequality regarding access to land, housing and basic services. The Citizenship Law continues to impact family ties for Syrians in the occupied Golan, which continue to be disrupted as a consequence of the territory's illegal annexation in 1981.[129]

116. High levels of taxes and restrictions on the use of water put a significant burden on Syrian farmers, who are thus in an unequal and disadvantaged position. Israeli settlements continued to receive the allotted share of 750 cubic metres of water per dunum of land, while the Syrian producers received 200 cubic metres. The cost of the water supply for agriculture to the Syrian farmers is approximately four times more than to the settlers. Water shortages usually result in the diversion of water resources to the settlements and, consequently, in some reduction of water provision to the Syrian farmers.[130]

117. In February 2013 Israeli media reported the intention of the Israel authorities to authorize drilling for oil in the occupied Golan Heights by issuing a license to prospect to a United States-Israeli energy company.[131]

IV. Conclusion

118. The prolonged Israeli occupation, its discriminatory regime and practices violate United Nations resolutions and international law, and should not be allowed to persist with impunity. The practices and regime, and their socioeconomic ramifications for the Palestinian people and Syrian citizens, will only result in increased suffering and, consequently, contribute to undermine peace and justice, which can only be achieved upon the realization of the right to self-determination for peoples under occupation.

119. Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan not only are illegal but also constitute an obstacle to peace. The international community should exert all possible efforts to ensure the implementation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. These efforts should include providing support for initiatives that seek to end the Israeli violations of international law in the occupied territories, especially Israeli settlement activities, as a first step towards a final and just resolution to the conflict that ends the occupation and allows the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as guaranteed by international law.

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[128] International Labour Organization (ILO), ILC.101/DG/APP, para. 137.
[129] CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 29.
[130] ILO, ILC.101/DG/APP, paras. 131-132; and information received from UNSCO.
[131] Yediot Ahronoth, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4347549,00.html.

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Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits: follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (New York, 22 April 2013)

I. Introduction

1. The special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was held in New York on 22 April 2013. The overall theme of the meeting was "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of financing for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda". The meeting featured the opening address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the keynote address by the Special Envoy and Representative on the Millennium Development Goals and Financial Development of the World Bank Group and statements on behalf of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD, the joint Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Monetary and Financial Committee of IMF, and WTO.

2. The meeting was organized around one high-level panel and two thematic debates. The high-level panel focused on the theme "World economic situation and prospects in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis". The thematic debates were organized around the following themes: "Financing for sustainable development, including through leveraging private capital, in the context of the

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follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012" and "Global partnership for development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda". Each thematic debate included initial presentations by senior staff of the World Bank, UNCTAD, WTO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, followed by an interactive discussion. The meeting had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/2013/52), which provided background information and suggested possible questions for discussion under the three themes.

3. The speakers at the high-level panel included one Prime Minister, one First Vice Prime Minister, a Deputy Prime Minister, a Vice-President of the European Commission, five Ministers and two Central Bank Governors. A significant number of Executive and Alternate Directors of the Boards of the World Bank and IMF participated in the meeting. Also participating were high-level governmental officials in the areas of finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation, as well as senior staff of organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations. Representatives of civil society and the business sector also participated actively in the high-level panel and the two thematic debates.[1]

4. The meeting was preceded by consultations within the Economic and Social Council and between its President and other members of its Bureau and the management of the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD, and by the preparatory meeting of the members of the Bureau with members of the Executive Board of the World Bank and the Executive Board of IMF. In the course of those consultations and meetings, the agenda and the format of the special high-level meeting were discussed and agreed upon.

II. Opening of the special high-level meeting

5. The opening of the meeting featured statements by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Néstor Osorio (Colombia), and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Jan Eliasson.

6. The President of the Economic and Social Council welcomed participants to the meeting and highlighted a few substantive points under each of the selected themes. First, in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis, the world economic situation and prospects had remained grim. The global slowdown had implied high levels of unemployment across the world, a slower pace of poverty reduction and a narrowing of fiscal space for investments in areas that were critical for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, downside risks included the possibility of the spiralling of geopolitical tensions and of a climate shock leading to a spiking in world food prices. He called for more forceful and concerted policy actions at both national and international levels to mitigate major systemic risks linked to a fragile global economy and ensure a stronger and sustained economic recovery. He also highlighted the need for an effective strategy of financing for sustainable development that should support inclusive economic growth that was environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. Such a strategy would require domestic resource mobilization, the fulfilment of all official development assistance (ODA) commitments, the use of innovative mechanisms of

[1] For the list of delegations, see document E/2013/INF/1.

financing, measures to leverage private finance through risk-sharing and other measures to better align private incentives with public goals. He stressed that it would also be necessary to promote financial stability in order to facilitate long-term investments in crucial sectors for sustainable development such as infrastructure. Moreover, he highlighted the need for a renewed global partnership for development within the post-2015 development agenda that should go beyond its present framework to embrace the changing development landscape and enable transformative change. He further emphasized that there was a need for a more accountable, inclusive and coherent system of global economic governance, which entailed effective arrangements for collective decision-making among diverse stakeholders at the international level. Such a system would also enhance the global partnership for development through ensuring the participation of all relevant actors in international policymaking and dialogue. Within the United Nations system, the Economic and Social Council, including through the special high-level meeting, had a critical role to play in increasing coherence, coordination and cooperation in that regard.

7. The Deputy Secretary-General addressed the meeting. He highlighted the ongoing effects of the global financial crisis, which continued to impede economic recovery worldwide, causing the ongoing jobs crisis, especially among youth, and deepening inequality problems. He stressed that Member States had agreed that poverty eradication was the greatest global challenge facing the world today, while the global slowdown had narrowed the space for necessary investments in education, health, sanitation and other drivers of development. He also called on the Economic and Social Council to play a crucial role in promoting dialogue among Member States on the post-2015 development agenda, including addressing the question of financing for sustainable development and promoting renewed commitment to the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. He emphasized the important objectives of the new intergovernmental committee of experts nominated by Member States to propose options on an effective financing strategy. He further emphasized the importance of the work of the Council in promoting South-South cooperation, as an additional form of partnership, exchange of experience and also financing mechanism. That and the coming year would represent very important opportunities for the strengthening of the enablers and intergovernmental arrangements for sustainable development. In addition to those pressing matters, particular attention should be given to the role and format of the High-level Political Forum launched in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. He encouraged participants to contribute to a future direction and vision, bold yet practical, for truly equitable and sustainable global development.

III. High-level Panel on theme 1: "World economic situation and prospects in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis"

8. The morning session featured a high-level panel on the first theme: "World economic situation and prospects in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis", followed by an interactive discussion. The Panel featured interventions by Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister, Fiji; Mr. Djoomart Otorbaev, First Vice Prime Minister, Kyrgyzstan; Mr. Mauricio Cárdenas Santamaria, Minister of Finance and Public Credit, Colombia; Mr. Olli Rehn,

Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, European Union; Mr. Abdul-Rahman Dirar, State Minister, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Sudan; Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Finland; Mr. Claus J. Raidl, President of the Austrian National Bank; Mr. Yaseen Anwar, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan; Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister of Development Cooperation, Sweden; Mr. Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Islamic Republic of Iran; Mr. Luis Arce Catacora, Minister of Economy and Public Finance, Plurinational State of Bolivia; and Ambassador Mark Espat, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, Belize.

9. Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance of broad consultations, involving all stakeholders, including civil society and academia, while recognizing the leading role of the intergovernmental process in formulating global economic governance. He noted, in particular, that the international financial and monetary system needed substantive reforms to reflect the twenty-first century role of developing countries in the world economy. Those reforms should concern properly regulating financial systems and capital markets for achieving growth and sustainable development, using special drawing rights (SDRs) for the benefit of developing countries, further expanding those countries' voting rights in the Bretton Woods institutions, and obtaining more concessionary debt restructuring and technology transfer for them. Renewed international partnerships for development were the basis for such people-centred international cooperation, which had started with the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus. The Group of 77 and China particularly emphasized the continuing critical catalytic role of ODA in achieving sustainable development and the urgency of completing the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2013 should aim at achieving concrete results that are equitable and take into full consideration the priorities of developing countries such as trade, aid, foreign direct investment (FDI) guarantees targeting productive sectors and supply-side capacity-building, especially in the least developed countries.

10. Mr. Djoomart Otorbaev, First Vice Prime Minister, Kyrgyzstan, criticized the unilateral expansionary policies pursued by developed countries that hurt the competitiveness of developing countries, and called for more coordinated international policymaking to make the world fairer and more equal. He was particularly critical of donor countries' failure to honour their commitments, citing that only 1 out of the 13 targets of the aid-effectiveness agenda was fulfilled, despite the substantial progress achieved by developing countries. He suggested that the Economic and Social Council consider convening another high-level forum on aid effectiveness. He also advocated countering the spillover effects of developed countries' unilateral policies by raising the role of the emerging market economies, especially of the BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa), in multilateral development banks. Developing countries should get more voting power in the Bretton Woods institutions. Competition in the design of policy advice was highly welcome in today's more complicated world. He welcomed the historic adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), and briefed the meeting on his country's achievements in that area.

11. Mr. Mauricio Cárdenas Santamaria, Minister of Finance and Public Credit, Colombia, shared his country's experience of working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and emphasized the importance of building on Millennium Development Goals successes in formulating the post-2015 development agenda. He stated that Colombia had met the Millennium Development Goals, with gross domestic product (GDP) growth the main driver behind meeting them. He noted that success in developing countries depended not just on good domestic policies but also on a benevolent external environment. In that connection, he expressed concern over the expansionary monetary policies pursued by reserve currency countries, which could generate difficulties in other countries. Colombia strongly supported the concept of sustainable development goals, including commitments on climate change. He said that his country was reducing subsidies on oil products and was devoting 20 per cent of the tax on oil producers to environmental protection. He said that the new development agenda should be guided by the priorities of sustainable development, including the objective of closing the per capita income gap between developed and emerging market developing countries. In addition, emerging market and middle-income countries' representation at the Bretton Woods institutions should be upgraded. He also stressed the overwhelming importance of raising productivity in developing countries as the main factor of growth convergence and developmental catch-up, and called for increased attention to the related investment and infrastructure needs, as well as measurable indicators to monitor progress.

12. Mr. Olli Rehn, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, European Union (EU), welcomed the emerging convergence of views on sustainable development goals to succeed the Millennium Development Goals and expressed the Union's strong support for the post-2015 development agenda. He assured that EU, as the largest donor accounting for over 50 per cent of global ODA, would continue to work hard for the implementation of the agenda of the Group of 20 in partnership with developing countries, including the endorsement of a larger role of developing countries in global governance, increased quota and representation at IMF. The Union was committed to effective multilateralism and recognized the centrality of the United Nations role in global economic governance, as stated in the Treaty of Lisbon. He called for more effective and closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Group of 20 in favour of developing countries and for achieving tangible progress at the Doha trade negotiations to help with faster world economic recovery. He also briefed the representatives on the current EU actions aimed at tackling the crisis in Europe, emphasizing the importance of improving the competitiveness of affected countries for getting out of the current stagnation. He stressed, inter alia, that fiscal solvency was essential for sustainable growth, but it was equally important to progress at an appropriate pace within a medium-term framework and in the context of other structural reforms. He said that fiscal deficits in the region had been halved to 3 per cent from 6 per cent in 2011 thanks to the fiscal consolidation efforts by member countries. According to him, that fiscal consolidation, in combination with actions of the European Central Bank, had restored financial market stability, while the recent reforms further strengthened confidence and improved EU governance.

13. Mr. Abdul-Rahman Dirar, State Minister, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Sudan, drew attention to the Financing for Development process and the outcome document of the 2012 International Conference on Financing for Development, especially concerning the needs of least developed countries, as

forming the basis of the post-2015 development cooperation framework. He also stressed the need for drawing adequate lessons from the experience of the world economic crisis, which laid bare the shortcomings of global governance. He expressed particular concern about the post-conflict countries' debt impeding their development efforts, and spoke of his country's urgent need for international support, following the successful reconciliation with the newly created South Sudan. He also appealed for intensive fast-track efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the remaining period ahead of the 2015 deadline, and stated that the Sudan was against the policies of economic sanctions and austerity.

14. Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Finland, pointed out that sustainable development implied intergenerational fairness. She noted, in that connection, that tackling youth unemployment, which reached over 50 per cent in some countries following the crises, was as important as tackling environmental degradation. To prevent the advent of a lost generation, Europe was introducing a programme of guaranteed employment or training after four months of unemployment, and such policies should be emulated elsewhere to help the 600 million unemployed youths worldwide. She also criticized that fossil fuel subsidies, often defended on the basis of social objectives, mostly benefited the well-to-do, and called for their cancellation. She also advocated closer international cooperation to fight the still widespread tax evasion that sapped resources from development-oriented uses.

15. Mr. Claus J. Raidl, President of the Austrian National Bank, drew attention to what he called an often-heard misunderstanding that the euro was the reason for the sovereign debt and banking crises in Europe. In his view, the introduction of the euro was an unqualified success, allowing all member countries to benefit from low inflation and capital inflows that boosted growth and development. The euro's reserve currency status was undisputed and its share in countries' reserves was still increasing. Many parts of Europe, with the notable exception of Central and Eastern Europe, were growing as fast as Asia and the United States of America. The balance-of-payments imbalances in Europe had stabilized; now the challenge was to restore competitiveness in deficit countries. He also addressed the involvement of Austrian banks in Central and Eastern Europe and said that the involvement of Austrian banks there was beneficial, though there were some problems, which banks needed to hold reserves against.

16. Mr. Yaseen Anwar, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, stated that global economic stability was a common good, requiring shared responsibility for its preservation. However, developing countries lacked shock absorbers and were threatened with budgetary crisis, reserves drawdown and debt distress unless the international community could come up with an adequate response to assist them. Pakistan faced additional economic and political difficulties stemming from the war on terrorism and the presence of over 4 million Afghan refugees on its territory. He said that the new post-2015 development agenda should continue to focus on poverty eradication and also on supporting home-grown economic plans and mobilization of domestic resources to promote self-reliance in developing countries. He also criticized the stalled dialogue in WTO and the soft-pedalling on institutional reforms in the global economic system, and called for differential treatment for small island States and the least developed countries. Of particular importance was delivering modern energy services to people in poor countries. In that connection,

the launching of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative by the Secretary-General of the United Nations was very welcome.

17. Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister of Development Cooperation, Sweden, stated that eradicating poverty was no longer just a dream, and this year's annual meeting of the Bretton Woods institutions was a reflection of that optimism. The way forward now was through achieving people's empowerment and accountable governments, especially relying on mobilization of domestic tax revenues and remittances, with ODA playing a catalytic role. The multilateral system needed to improve its efficiency to come up with effective solutions for tackling global challenges out of reach of national governments. In that context, it was important for the United Nations system to embrace results-oriented modern management culture and improve its cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions. Coordination at the country level through cooperation between resident coordinators in areas such as capacity-building for democratic governance, gender equality and improving statistics offered the biggest potential for arriving at such development solutions.

18. Mr. Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Islamic Republic of Iran, highlighted that development financing had been the most critical challenge for developing countries before and after the crisis. Therefore, non-inflationary financing for reducing poverty, inequality and environmental degradation was critical for achieving sustainable development. In particular, 80 per cent of infrastructure investment in developing countries was funded by public resources, and such investment needs were projected to reach $1,000 billion per year by 2020. Despite the progress achieved, poverty and environmental degradation were prevalent, especially in Africa and South Asia. Given the limited availability of public resources, innovative models such as public-private partnerships needed to be explored. He also highlighted that Iran's human development indicator rose from 0.654 in 2000 to 0.742 in 2012, while the Gini coefficient dropped from 0.368 to 0.343 in urban areas, and from 0.398 to 0.362 in rural areas. He criticized the sanctions imposed by Western Governments on Iran with far-reaching adverse consequences for its people and trading partners. In particular, he lamented the World Bank's refusal to lend to Iran despite the presence of a good investment environment and many bankable projects in the country. Moreover, that refusal was in violation of the Articles of Agreement of the World Bank, which required equal treatment for all members. As a chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Iran supported strengthening the Economic and Social Council as the main consultation framework to promote international economic cooperation.

19. Mr. Luis Arce Catacora, Minister of Economy and Public Finance, Plurinational State of Bolivia, was of the view that no effective and permanent solution had been found against the United States- and EU-induced financial, energy, food and climate crises that fed on each other. A bold response to tackling the consequences of those crises required rejecting the capitalist orthodoxy and should involve fiscal stimulus for global growth, a tax on financial transactions and other high profit sectors and debt restructuring. Likewise, duty- and quota-free market access for least developed countries and other developing countries, dependent on commodity exports, was critical since those countries were especially vulnerable to external shocks. He emphasized that inequality was increasing, even in the United States, as evidenced by a drop in real wages. Those trends would add to global pessimism. The speaker further emphasized the need for proper government interventions in the economy to

improve the current low investment environment and help to boost investor confidence.

20. Ambassador Mark Espat, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, Belize, called for ensuring equitable representation of all States in international economic governance. He emphasized that the Group of 20 should pay attention to the General Assembly as the universal, inclusive and truly legitimate forum for global policy processes. He addressed the difficulties of middle-income countries, which were particularly vulnerable to the volatility of the current economic and financial environment. Those countries, such as the small island States, required better liquidity access from multilateral development banks. In that context, he called for indexing those countries' debt repayment to their exports and terms of trade changes. He also said that unscrupulous lenders should share the burden of unsustainable debt.

21. During the interactive discussion, some representatives noted the increased role of emerging market economies as providers of capital flows. That paradigm shift should be reflected in the governing structure of the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant economic financial forums. Some representatives asked what specific measures those institutions were considering with regard to climate change and how they were going to coordinate their actions with the United Nations.

22. One speaker expressed his opinion that the Chinese economy was likely to slow, with a definite negative impact on commodity-exporting developing countries. He also thought that the effectiveness of the Japanese monetary expansion would be offset by adverse demographic trends and the United States shale gas boost would be partly neutralized by fiscal constraints. Most importantly, EU austerity policies were wrongheaded and could lead to an Argentine-type crisis. Under those circumstances, international financial institutions and large corporations should plan for worst-case scenarios and crisis management.

23. It was further stated that the hoped-for reforms in financial regulation had not materialized, and the financial system needed to be shrunk by separating investment and commercial banking, to avoid moral hazard associated with being too big to fail. Additional measures needed included using SDRs for climate change financing, setting up resolution funds for loss absorption, revisiting the proposal for sovereign debt restructuring mechanisms, and conducting derivatives transactions only through exchanges, with product screening for consumer protection.

24. It was highlighted that debt servicing was becoming a big drag on the economies of finance-deprived developing countries. In that context, one speaker proposed that the Economic and Social Council sponsor a conference of creditors to least developed countries. He also called for more capacity-building measures in the post-2015 development agenda for those countries.

25. Some speakers noted that the Monterrey Consensus was more relevant today than ever, as the risks that had inspired it were more prevalent now, while both the official and private sector were unprepared. In that connection, it was proposed to create a global risk mitigation solutions centre with a network of national risk centres, somewhat similar to the underutilized World Bank facility. One speaker also expressed his view that the Monterrey Consensus emphasized the priority of the mobilization of domestic resources, not ODA or external debt for economic growth

and development, and that rule of law, business-friendly investment environment and secure property rights were more important than international factors.

26. It was stressed that the coming two years were critical in terms of preparing the post-2015 agenda and ensuring adequate financing for the implementation of the Secretary-General's action plan for sustainable development.

IV. Keynote address

27. The morning session also featured a keynote address from Mr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, Special Envoy and Representative on the Millennium Development Goals and Financial Development, World Bank Group, on "Introduction to the post-2015 development agenda from the World Bank perspective, with a special focus on financing for development". The speaker emphasized that the original Millennium Development Goals were articulated independently of a financing framework, which came later in the shape of the Monterrey Consensus. Therefore, in a context of fiscal consolidation, the discussion of post-2015 goals must be integrated with the consideration of supporting financing. The speaker highlighted that costing the Millennium Development Goals required too many assumptions and should not be a major objective of the exercise of formulating a post-2015 development agenda.

28. Good policies and credible institutions would enhance the impact of available resources and leverage additional resources from both domestic and foreign sources. He recommended that developing countries design targeted evidence-based policies and support sound institutions, generate more revenues, ensure efficient public spending and promote financial deepening and inclusion. At the same time, the international community should support those actions by maximizing the impact of ODA, supporting new development partners, leveraging the private sector, tapping into new sources of finance, and delivering global public goods. The speaker highlighted that no quantity of financing, whether grant, concessional or non-concessional, could achieve the development goals without supporting policies and a credible commitment to combating poverty. Finally, he underscored that financial instruments had different properties and comparative advantages. Selecting the right combination of instruments to meet a given goal, in a given country context, might be one of the most important tasks ahead to enable the full implementation of the next development framework post-2015.

V. Statements by intergovernmental representatives of institutional stakeholders

29. The morning session concluded with statements by Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan), President, Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD; Mr. Jorge Familiar Calderón, Vice-President and Corporate Secretary, World Bank Group, and Acting Executive Secretary of the IMF/World Bank Development Committee; Ms. Patricia Alonso-Gamo, Deputy Secretary of IMF and Acting Secretary of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC); and Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division, WTO.

30. The President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD emphasized the importance of trade as an engine of development and highlighted the need for

expeditious and successful realization of the development objectives of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. He highlighted the need for a development-centred and inclusive system of international trade, as emphasized in the outcome of the Thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of UNCTAD, held in Doha, Qatar, in April 2012. He also pointed to the importance of ensuring the coherence and consistency of the international economic architecture. The crisis had highlighted the need to put in place transparent systems for timely resolutions of debt crises to minimize welfare losses and spillover effects to other countries. He further emphasized the need to build productive capacities, including through technological learning and innovation. A much more concerted effort was needed to mobilize investment into productive innovation across large parts of the developing world.

31. The Vice-President and Corporate Secretary of the World Bank reported on the outcome of the meeting of the Development Committee. The Development Committee endorsed a framework for guiding the planning and implementation of the World Bank Group's activities. Five principles would guide strategy of the World Bank in the future: serve poor and vulnerable people in a sustainable manner everywhere; recognize the diversity of clients; work as one World Bank Group; focus on development solutions; and exercise dynamic selectivity. Moreover, the Development Committee highlighted the historic opportunity to end extreme poverty within a generation and endorsed the global target of reducing the extreme poverty rate — the percentage of people living on less than $1.25 a day — to 3 per cent by 2030. Achieving that goal would require strong growth across the developing world, as well as translation of growth into poverty reduction to an extent not seen before in many low-income countries. It would also require overcoming institutional and governance challenges, and investing in infrastructure and in agricultural productivity. Moreover, the Committee equally endorsed the goal to promote shared prosperity, which would entail fostering income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population in every country. The speaker stressed that sustained economic growth needed a reduction in inequality. In that context, the importance of the relationship between the World Bank and the United Nations was also emphasized.

32. The Deputy Secretary of IMF and Acting Secretary of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) reported on the outcome of the meeting of IMFC. The discussions focused on the latest global economic developments, key risks for the global economy, and policy actions required to mitigate them, as well as the role of IMF in supporting its membership in addressing those challenges. The overall assessment of the global economy was that an uneven recovery was emerging but growth and job creation remained week. Global growth in 2013 was not expected to be higher than in 2012. Going forward, the Committee called for a collective action to restore the global economic resilience by decisively addressing medium-term structural challenges, including: the need for financial sector reform; the need for durable fiscal adjustment and institutional reform to deal with the future trajectory of public and private debt; the need to stimulate job creation and inclusive growth; and worries over currency valuations and competitive depreciation in view of exceptionally accommodative monetary policy in key advanced economies.

33. The Director of the Development Division of WTO reported on the present state of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations and prospects for the

forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia. Even though the agreement on the Doha Round was not close, especially in view of decreasing growth in international trade, there had been progress in terms of the scope and depth of the deal, which were much broader and deeper than in previous rounds. For Bali, there were prospects to have agreement on several issues, including trade facilitation, agriculture and specific issues for the least developed countries. Given the important contribution that trade-led economic growth had provided to increasing domestic revenue generation, it was essential that any post-2015 development agenda must necessarily include economic growth as an essential pillar of its means of implementation.

VI. Thematic debate of the whole on theme 2: "Financing for sustainable development, including through leveraging private capital, in the context of the follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012"

34. The first thematic debate featured presentations by Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat; Mr. James Zhan, Director, Division on Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD; and Mr. Chris Lane, Division Chief, Low Income Countries Division, Strategy, Policy and Review Department, IMF, followed by an interactive discussion.

35. Ms. Akhtar emphasized that a financing for development strategy was an urgent priority as the international community moved forward to formulate a post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the need for significant mobilization of resources to promote sustainable development. Governments were now in the process of establishing an intergovernmental committee to focus on an effective sustainable development financing strategy. That strategy would have to move its emphasis from external to national domestic resource mobilization and should place more emphasis on directing private flows for development purposes. A prerequisite for that would be to ensure the financial system was stable with an enabling policy environment to effectively and efficiently allocate resources. Financing gaps were especially large in areas that the private sector had not found attractive on a risk-reward basis, including four categories: (a) long-term investments, such as infrastructure; (b) riskier investments, including low-carbon investments, innovation, and financing of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as other forms of inclusive finance; (c) financing of international cooperation, including maintenance of the global commons; and (d) additional financing for human development. Despite the ever-increasing need for long-term financing, especially for infrastructure, the long time frame necessary for many types of investments was outside the investment parameters of many investors, even for those considered to be long-term investors.

36. The diagnostic long-term financing report for the Group of 20, a collaborative effort of the World Bank, IMF, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations and other agencies, pointed out that the availability of long-term financing had declined since the financial crisis. While the issue of a long investment horizon arose with traditional infrastructure investment, it was particularly relevant for low-carbon infrastructure projects. The speaker highlighted that both private and public finance, as well as public sector policies and international cooperation, would be necessary to finance those large and growing needs. A fundamental challenge would be to ensure complementarities across different sources of finance, as each type of financing had unique investment objectives, fiduciary responsibilities, and associated incentives. Public-private partnerships had become increasingly looked to as a mechanism to leverage official resources with private finance through risk-sharing. Moreover, domestic financing would also be key. Strengthening local financial systems and encouraging a more effective allocation of resources was important. However, domestic capital and financial markets needed to be monitored and regulated to minimize risks to the real economy, including those associated with short-term volatile capital cross-border flows. In addition, financial inclusion and access to financial services by poor and vulnerable population groups had been found to be beneficial for economic and social development. Moreover, although not sufficient, official financing would remain crucial, both directly as well as to leverage private resources. Donor countries should aim at fulfilling their ODA targets and be actively engaged with the United Nations in developing financing strategies for sustainable development. National, regional and multilateral development banks could also play a catalytic role in mobilizing long-term investment financing, as well as countercyclical policies that could help to reduce volatility associated with financial markets.

37. Mr. Zhan made a presentation on "Leveraging private investment for sustainable development: challenges and policy actions". The speaker emphasized that, currently, foreign direct investment (FDI) did not serve as the locomotive of the world economy. Indeed, FDI had declined by 18 per cent in 2012 and its recovery would take longer than expected. Yet, in 2012, developing countries had surpassed developed countries in FDI inflows by some $130 billion. The speaker further highlighted that transnational corporations played a significant role in the global economy, moreover, they were sitting on a record amount of cash reserves. The challenge was therefore to mobilize FDI for inclusive, responsible and green growth. In that context, the current global investment regime was not functioning effectively. More coherence and consistency was needed. Most importantly, the transfer of technologies should be further encouraged.

38. Looking ahead, the speaker laid out four policy challenges: (a) mainstreaming sustainable development into the investment policy regime; (b) promoting investment in inclusive growth; (c) promoting responsible investment; and (d) channelling investment into green growth and infrastructure development. Mainstreaming sustainable development in national and international investment regimes should follow an "Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development", as laid out by UNCTAD, that would be anchored in core principles, guidelines for national investment policies, options for international investment agreements and investment policy hubs and reviews. Promoting investment in the poor, for the poor and with the poor was the goal of the Joint UNCTAD/International Chamber of Commerce Initiative on Pro-Poor Investment. The Initiative promoted viable and sustainable investment in poverty alleviation, the production of accessible and affordable goods

and services, and the fostering of business linkages with small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises. The speaker also referred to the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework. The Framework identified policy objectives and options in the form of recommended actions, proposed checklists, case studies and good practices, provided an interactive online inventory of good practices, offered a user guide and methods for policy monitoring and evaluation and provided a set of indicators to measure progress. The panellist further elaborated on the work of UNCTAD in promoting responsible investment for sustainable development. He mentioned the potential for new tools to channel investment into green growth and infrastructure development, which might include engaging sovereign wealth funds, impact investment or including a sustainable development goal for investment.

39. Mr. Lane shared the work of IMF on "Financial Assistance and Policy Support to Low-Income Countries". His presentation emphasized the importance of self-sustained financing, improving facilities and sharpening policy advice. The purpose of IMF concessional financing was to address balance-of-payments problems arising from external shocks, e.g., commodity prices, capital outflows, and domestic shocks and vulnerabilities, which included macroeconomic imbalances, natural disasters, States in fragile situations and small and very small States. The speaker highlighted that the Average Annual Lending Commitments for the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) rose from 0.9 billion SDRs for the period 1988-2000 to 1.6 billion SDRs for 2009-2012. Debt relief had led to a declining debt burden, which in turn had created space for higher poverty-reducing spending. Total external debt (in percentage of GDP) had gone down and was projected to remain relatively stable over the next few years, while debt service decreased and poverty-reducing expenditures (in percentage of GDP) had risen steadily, except for a small dip during the world financial and economic crisis. Citing IMF research, the speaker projected that for 2013-2035, the demand for IMF concessional financing could follow a low demand scenario of 1.1 billion SDRs or increase slightly from the current demand of 1.6 billion to 1.7 billion in a high-demand scenario.

40. The speaker underscored that there was an ongoing need for PRGT financing for countries with balance-of-payments needs. PRGT financing would require a mixed resources base with contributors providing loan resources and a self-sustained trust fund with subsidy resources. Achieving a self-sustained PRGT would be anchored in a "three-pillar strategy". The first pillar would provide the baseline envelope with SDR 1.25 billion (average) lending per year; the second pillar would provide contingent measures which were available following years of exceptional need; and the third pillar would follow the principle of self-sustainability, which would include future modifications to low-income countries' facilities. Looking ahead, the speaker mentioned that the baseline lending capacity for PRGT was projected to be 1.25 billion SDRs with windfall gold profits; however, without windfall gold profits, it would only reach 0.9 billion SDRs. The speaker focused on measures that could help to improve IMF facilities. He highlighted that the new facilities were generally found to be working well and, consequently, only refinements were necessary. Those refinements included providing subsidies to the poorest and most vulnerable low-income countries and greater lending flexibility. Finally, it was crucial to sharpen policy support. The strategic priority was to achieve higher sustainable growth. That would call for scaling-up investment, managing natural resources, creating broad-based inclusive growth and recognizing fragile and small States' needs.

41. During the interactive discussion, participants underscored that there was a need for an integrated approach to financing for sustainable development. It was emphasized that financing for sustainable development should build on the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development as major reference points for development cooperation. The work of the intergovernmental committee on financing a sustainable development strategy would provide an important contribution to formulate a coherent mechanism.

42. In that context, it was emphasized that the commitments on financing for development, especially those on ODA, should be met. Least developed countries, in particular, suffer from recent declines in ODA. Public resources would have to come from a variety of international, regional and national sources. However, given the size of the financing needs for sustainable development, it was clear that official sources of financing would not be sufficient.

43. Many speakers stressed that the bulk of funds would likely have to come from the private sector. In that context it was emphasized that the challenge would lie in redirecting global assets towards sustainable development. Resources were not being effectively allocated by the private sector for long-term investment in sustainable development owing to a number of institutional, financial, regulatory, and technical barriers.

44. There was some discussion as to whether debates on financing of sustainable development should include global commons. Some delegations were of the view that that was a sovereign issue and should not distract from commitments related to financing for development, while others emphasized the need to address all climate change through international cooperation.

45. Several speakers in both that and the earlier sessions voiced their support for more debate on an international debt restructuring mechanism.

46. It was also emphasized that the implementation of financing strategies needed to leave policy space for nationally owned development strategies for accountable and transparent policies.

47. There was a convergence of views that complementarities across different sources of finance should be strengthened, as each type of financing had unique investment objectives, fiduciary responsibilities and associated incentives. Those differences needed to be better understood in order to design policies that could effectively leverage private financing and align private sector incentives with public goals.

VII. Thematic debate of the whole on theme 3: "Global partnership for development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda"

48. The second thematic debate featured presentations by Mr. Jos Verbeek, Lead Economist, World Bank; Mr. Richard Kozul-Wright, Officer-in-Charge, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, UNCTAD; and Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division, WTO, followed by an interactive discussion.

49. Mr. Verbeek presented the *Global Monitoring Report 2013: Rural-Urban Dynamics and the Millennium Development Goals* (The World Bank Group, 2013).

He illustrated that countries with higher levels of urbanization had been more successful in lowering poverty. For example, in Brazil, 84 per cent of the population was urban, while 15 per cent was rural and the poverty rate was 6 per cent in 2009. In Uganda, during the same year, the reverse held true — 84 per cent of the population was rural, and 15 per cent was urban, while the poverty rate was a higher 38 per cent. In general, according to the speaker, absolute poverty rates were lower in urban centres than in rural areas. In 2010, 76 per cent of the world's poor lived in rural areas and, according to 2008 figures, 11.6 per cent of the total urban population was poor in comparison with 29.4 per cent of the total rural population. Mr. Verbeek pointed out that disparities were also large between rural and urban areas for other Millennium Development Goals. For example, with respect to sanitation, 80 per cent of urban residents versus 50 per cent of rural residents had access to a toilet in 2010.

50. Overall, according to the panellist, poverty was located along a spectrum from rural to urban, with many types of settlements from small to large towns. That was a more realistic representation than the simplified division into rural and urban areas. In general, according to the speaker, the smaller the town the higher the incidence of poverty and the less stellar the access to Millennium Development Goal-related services. While urbanization could help to pull people out of poverty and advance progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, it needed to be managed well since it could also lead to problems such as the burgeoning growth of slums. Mr. Verbeek advocated an integrated strategy to better manage the planning-connecting-financing nexus of urbanization. He also referred to a rural-urban dynamic whereby a combination of well-managed urbanization and rural development could serve to reduce poverty and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

51. Mr. Kozul-Wright stated that, while the Millennium Development Goals did an outstanding job in reinvigorating the donor community and galvanizing aid flows, success in meeting the goals could not be attained by aid flows alone. He pointed out that growth must be a central component of any meaningful development agenda. However, it was important to ensure that growth was inclusive and sustainable. Looking ahead, he pointed out that while the Millennium Development Goals were devised and evolved in an environment driven by finance-led globalization, the post-2015 development agenda was being framed in a very different global environment and needed to break away from the "business as usual" policies that had led to the increasingly fragile growth path of the past decade. He also argued that the existing Millennium Development Goal framework did not provide an understanding of the systemic risks and dangers that could constrain, damage or derail development prospects in the coming years. The speaker stressed the need to take a hard look at some of the basic concepts that frame our thinking about the challenges ahead. He expressed concern at the fact that industrial development had not figured in Millennium Development Goal discussions. Similarly, he mentioned that sustainability must have an economic dimension and that distributional issues were also key to sustaining virtuous economic cycles. There was also a need to talk seriously about employment policies, industrial policies and fiscal policies as part of an integrated framework.

52. Mr. Kozul-Wright also stated that the international community needed to discuss Goal 8 and how to better integrate it with an inclusive and sustainable development agenda. According to him, a fundamental rethink on global

partnerships for development was warranted. He pointed to the need for a global new deal that would benefit developed as well as developing countries. The key was to tame the financial system so that it turned into the servant rather than the master of the real economy and got back to the business of providing security for savings and mobilizing resources for productive investment. Regional cooperation would also have a much larger role to play in a more balanced international architecture. The panellist also underscored that new partnerships had emerged around the idea of South-South cooperation. However, they would face challenges over the next decade as developing countries faced their own development challenges as well as the need to mobilize huge amounts of resources for infrastructure. In that context, Mr. Kozul-Wright pointed out that the recently announced BRICS Bank was a huge step forward in South-South cooperation but should not be seen as a substitute for more effective multilateral mechanisms.

53. Mr. Priyadarshi made the case that economic growth had been a major factor in human development and that engaging in trade in a diversified basket of products was central to maintaining both growth and employment over the long run. He emphasized the importance of economic growth in the post-2015 agenda, both substantively, given its interrelationship with social objectives, and politically, given aspirations for income growth. He cited research by the Michael Spence Commission on Growth and Development, which had found that, since 1950, virtually all cases of rapid large-scale human development had been marked by a high average rate of economic growth. The Spence Commission also found that all countries transformed by sustained high growth had used the open world economy to drive their development. Moreover, Mr. Priyadarshi stated, the latest *Human Development Report* (2013) also showed a positive correlation between an open global trade regime and achieving higher human development.

54. According to Mr. Priyadarshi, the post-2015 development agenda must include economic growth as a central pillar of its strategy while at the same time ensuring that economic growth and development were made sustained and sustainable. It needed to reflect the fact that virtually all cases of large-scale human development had been marked by a high average rate of economic growth, and that the open global economy, entrenched in the multilateral trading system, had played a multifaceted role as a driver of growth in all of them. A new development framework must therefore help other countries to emulate that success, and growth, trade, diversification and value added must figure prominently within the post-2015 development agenda. In terms of practical measures, Mr. Priyadarshi emphasized the need to enhance both the demand and supply-side environments to allow countries to grow quicker by tapping into the global economy. He mentioned that the WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali in December 2013 would present an opportunity to harvest deals on trade-related issues that would facilitate trade. In addition, the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade would provide an opportunity to review progress on Aid for Trade and give a fresh mandate and vigour to the initiative. Overall, the speaker stressed the importance of there being a strong focus on economic aspects of development in the contours of the post-2015 development and poverty alleviation agenda.

55. In the discussion that followed, a participant argued that growth on its own was not sufficient in all cases for improving the well-being of poor people. The growth experienced in many countries had proven to be unsustainable and needed to be accompanied by socially inclusive policies, improved access to finance and other

measures to reduce inequality. In Brazil, for instance, the sharing of prosperity and socioeconomic inclusion were equally important in addressing poverty. In that context, the point was also made that measures geared towards increasing people's ownership of the process of development would also lead to greater awareness of environmental sustainability.

56. Some delegations emphasized the importance of ensuring the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-State stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector, in the global partnership for development.

57. Participants stressed the need to broaden and strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in multilateral frameworks and norm-setting, which was deemed a priority on the global policy agenda. Mention was also made of the need to strengthen the voice and participation of African countries in the Bretton Woods institutions.

58. The important role of aid on leveraging other forms of finance was underscored. In particular, reference was made to improve the quantity and quality of ODA in a manner that served to mobilize private finance. In that regard, mention was also made of the need to rethink public-private partnerships, including those relating to infrastructure projects. Speakers also asserted the need to support both South-South and North-South cooperation, and that South-South cooperation should not preclude North-South cooperation.

59. There was discussion pertaining to the Millennium Development Goals. A participant stated that Goal 8 (Develop a global partnership for development) missed out important issues such as economic growth and global governance. It was also argued that Goal 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) needed to be prioritized alongside the other goals. Mention was also made of the need to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, especially in rural and lagging areas and conflict-affected States.

60. The importance of having a credible accountability and monitoring mechanism within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda was also emphasized. It was highlighted that the Economic and Social Council should be seen as a mechanism for reviewing progress pertaining to the post-2015 development agenda. Mention was also made regarding the need for greater transparency of financial flows.

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Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report analyses efforts made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work, as mandated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). It points to a range of initiatives in that regard, while also identifying challenges and gaps. The report points to the following key building blocks for the further integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development:

- Commitment at the highest level of the United Nations system bolstered by clear and coherent intergovernmental guidance
- Stronger coordination and policy coherence
- Enabling culture of wider coordination both within the United Nations system and with external partners
- Accountability and transparency
- Adequate institutional support within the United Nations system
- Building analytical capacities, new competencies and tools to support developing countries

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- System of continuous learning and improvements in practice
- Mobilization and allocation of resources to drive sustainable development.

The report makes the case that integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development more systematically will enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to support Member States in taking forward the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals.

I. Introduction

1. At the Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to sustainable development. Their vision is one where the pursuit of a more sustainable future for all guides the actions of Governments and non-State actors and engages all members of society.

2. In paragraph 3 of the Rio+20 outcome document (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives acknowledged the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

3. In paragraph 93 of the outcome document, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives called for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in that regard.[1] The present report responds to that mandate.

4. The report takes stock of how the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — have been integrated in the work of the United Nations system to date. It highlights the successes and challenges encountered so far, with a view to identifying lessons to strengthen United Nations system support to Member States. It serves as a preliminary stocktaking and highlights the work ahead.

5. Section II of the report touches on the implications of the concept of sustainable development for integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system. Section III briefly examines how individual United Nations entities are working to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in their work. Section IV takes stock of existing efforts by the United Nations system as a whole to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development across the national, regional and global levels of the system. Section V sheds light on the strengths of the United Nations system, future challenges and lessons derived from experiences to date. Section VI sets out a few recommendations to inform future efforts.

II. Implications of translating sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system

6. The goal of sustainable development is to ensure the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for the planet and for present and future generations. Sustainable development emphasizes a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to decision-making at all levels. It rests on

[1] In paragraph 91, they also emphasized the need to further enhance the mainstreaming of sustainable development in the respective mandates, programmes, strategies and decision-making processes [of United Nations system organizations] in support of the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development.

integration and a balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals and objectives in both public and private decision-making. It emphasizes intragenerational and intergenerational equity.

7. A sustainable development approach broadens the frame of reference and community in which development issues are understood, decisions are taken, and implementation is executed and evaluated.

8. Poverty eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Today, 20 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, sustainable development has established itself, at least conceptually, as the overarching development framework for making that happen.

9. The Rio+20 outcome document includes a call to further system-wide coherence and coordination (para. 78); strengthen operational activities for sustainable development (paras. 94 and 95); and looks inward, to improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices (para. 96).

10. The outcome document contains a range of specific actions for Governments to undertake with the support of the United Nations system. The United Nations system has developed a framework to share responsibilities among various organizations in supporting Governments in implementing those mandates.[2]

11. The work of the United Nations includes support to the forums where the international community reflects on policy, agrees on norms and guides development cooperation. The United Nations thus has a unique role and responsibility to help in the pursuit of sustainable development through its analytic, normative, policy and operational work.

12. Individual United Nations system entities must therefore strengthen measures and efforts to ensure the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions at the level of strategies/policies, programmes/projects and administration/operations. They must also work collectively to support integrated policymaking at the national, regional and international levels. Sustainable development also requires new partnerships and a different way of monitoring and communicating results to Governments and stakeholders. Coherent guidance from Member States is important to steer efforts in that regard, particularly through United Nations system intergovernmental processes.

13. Not all United Nations system policies and programmes have economic, social and environmental dimensions; however, it is important that the potential economic, social and environmental implications of policies and programmes be carefully considered. This is essential in order to avoid unintended impacts, conflicting policies or unsustainable outcomes. It also enables the United Nations system to identify synergies and possible triple-win opportunities. At a time of dwindling resources for development cooperation, it is imperative to maximize the co-benefits of each action.

14. However, moving this concept into practice is not easy. It means transformational change that challenges the status quo and a system designed under a different development model. It requires a fundamental rethinking of the way the

[2] See http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/followupbyunsystem.html.

United Nations conceives its analytical, policy and operational work. With more than 20 years of experience in sustainable development activities around the globe, the United Nations system and its partners are still learning how to consistently and effectively support integrated approaches and overcome structural and other challenges.

III. Mainstreaming sustainable development within United Nations system entities

Building on the United Nations environmental and social sustainability framework

15. Efforts to gear the United Nations system towards sustainable development can take as a point of departure the framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system.[3] This framework was developed in 2011 as an inter-agency initiative through the Environment Management Group. By better assessing the implications of the Organization's choices and actions, it provides a platform from which to strengthen the sustainability of (a) strategies and policies; (b) operational activities through programmes and projects; and (c) administrative decisions of the United Nations system, such as facility management. The framework was conceived to help better understand how the complex array of United Nations undertakings influence one another in terms of environmental and social impacts and outcomes.[3] It does not cover the economic dimension. The present report builds in part on the approach and entry points developed as part of this framework.

16. Since the first Rio Conference in 1992, the United Nations system has endeavoured to evolve its support to policy development, its operational activities and its ways of working, so as to better help countries to move towards sustainable development paths.

17. Many United Nations system organizations have undertaken efforts to integrate sustainable development from their overarching multi-year strategic plans down to the programme/project level. Others have employed bottom-up approaches, with experience from the national and subnational levels informing wider strategic planning. Box 1 below highlights examples of the approach taken by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Box 1
Examples of the approach taken in integrating the three dimensions in strategic planning

UN-Habitat took a bottom-up approach to mainstreaming sustainable development by starting at the subnational level in 1992 with the Sustainable Cities Programme. In 2002, it produced a paper on sustainable urbanization that was a turning point for the organization. Integrating the

[3] See http://www.unemg.org/IssueManagementGroups/EnvironmentalandSocialSustainability/ESreport/tabid/102177/Default.aspx.

three dimensions of sustainable development was extended up through planning and programme policies until sustainable development became the underlying principle of the UN-Habitat medium-term strategic and institutional plan for the period 2008-2013 and again in the upcoming plan for the period 2014-2019.

The ILO Strategic Policy Framework for 2010-2015 has green jobs and decent work as a cross-cutting theme. ILO is expected to be better able to advocate and advise on sustainable development in such areas as:

(a) Assessing and realizing the potential for green and decent jobs in national and local policies and development strategies; and

(b) Maximizing the employment effect and enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.

UNESCO is currently in the process of defining its next medium-term strategy, to be adopted by member States at the thirty-seventh session of the General Conference in November 2013. Two overarching objectives are proposed: (a) Peace: contributing to lasting sustainable development; and (b) Contributing to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. UNESCO's entire programme would thus be geared towards those objectives.

In its strategic plan for 2008-2013, the goal of UNDP in the area of environment and energy is the strengthening of national capacity to manage the environment in a sustainable manner while ensuring adequate protection of the poor. Specific results have been achieved, notably in (a) mainstreaming environmental and energy issues in development planning; and (b) building local capacity to better manage the environment and deliver services, especially water and energy.

18. At the same time, a review of the strategic plans of a few organizations shows that some make references to the importance of sustainable development in broad terms. Their objectives, expected results and reviews generally focus on the sectoral area of work of the organization without systematic reference to related dimensions of sustainable development. The ongoing development of a new generation of strategic plans for funds and programmes and a few specialized agencies is the occasion for deeper, more systematic and more meaningful integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. This would also be consistent with the guidance of Rio+20 and the General Assembly quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations system operational activities for development on integrating sustainable development in United Nations operational activities.

Box 2
Understanding the interactions between the economy and the environment

In 2012, the Statistical Commission adopted a System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework. This is the first international standard for environmental-economic accounting. This

standard, specific extension pertaining to energy, water, and land and ecosystems could be instrumental in addressing a number of Rio+20 outcomes.

The World Bank is working on several approaches that seek to strengthen sustainability at the country level by moving beyond gross domestic product (GDP) to evaluate economic performance, including genuine savings and wealth accounting. This effort is being bolstered by the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) Partnership.

19. The General Assembly quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations system operational activities for development has pointed to ways of using operational activities to help Governments to embark on sustainable development paths. The next step is implementation (see section IV.A below). To do so, however, organizations need to more systematically apply sustainability conditions such as safeguards and find triple-win approaches that support progress across all three dimensions of sustainable development.

20. A number of organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, have made progress in developing tools such as environmental and social sustainability frameworks and assessment tools that incorporate sustainable development considerations into their policies and programmes (see box 3 below).

21. However, an inter-agency review of United Nations practices related to environmental and social impact assessments[3] revealed that the lack of a system-wide standard has produced an ad hoc approach with varying levels of thoroughness and rigour. Further, there appears to be a varied understanding of the purpose and benefits of applying environmental and social sustainability measures as well as different expectations of what such measures can deliver.

Box 3
Integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions in programmes and projects

UNDP has updated its Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures in order to prevent and manage potential risks to the environment and people at the earliest possible planning stage. The objective is also to identify opportunities to strengthen support to development planning processes.

FAO employs environmental impact assessment procedures to ensure that its field operations are consistent with its 16 governing principles. These principles address various aspects of environmental and social impact, such as the management of biological diversity for food and agriculture.

The BioTrade Initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) promotes production and trade in goods

and services derived from native biodiversity. Over 19 countries are involved in the BioTrade Initiative, which provides a potential source of jobs and income, export diversification, and rural development and improved livelihoods of rural and local communities.

In its monitoring and evaluation of projects, the World Bank uses core sector indicators to measure a project's sustainability with respect to infrastructure, environmental resource management, urbanization and social development. It is also reviewing its results measurement system for concessional financing.

22. Efforts have also been made to assess the environmental impact in United Nations system facilities and operations practices, including travel, procurement and the use of information technology (see box 4 below).

23. The United Nations climate neutrality strategy initiated and, to some degree, coordinated system-wide reporting and greening activities. However, it is still largely up to individual agencies to implement significant greening schemes. The development of a system-wide environmental management system, recently endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management, should help to coordinate revisions of operational modalities that are required across the system (see box 4 below).

Box 4
Reducing the carbon footprint of the United Nations

Major efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the United Nations have been undertaken by the UNEP Sustainable United Nations facility, which coordinates and supports the implementation of the United Nations climate neutrality strategy.

To date, five United Nations organizations have achieved climate neutrality through a combination of emissions reduction and offsetting: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Climate Change Secretariat), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNEP, UNDP headquarters and the World Bank Group.

In April 2013, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) committed to the development and implementation of environmental management systems in each organization with a goal to further reduce the Organization's footprint (see para. 67 below).

24. A thorough review of the internal structures and workflows of United Nations system organizations would be needed in order to better understand how to overcome the sectoral boundaries that hinder achieving a more integrated approach. Divisions or offices on sustainable development often exist in parallel to sectoral divisions. It is important to understand how such structures can best work together, along with strategic planning units, in ensuring that consideration of all three dimensions of sustainable development takes place throughout the organization.

25. Regardless of whether adequate structures are in place, staff at all levels often lack the capacity and resources to truly undertake integrated approaches in supporting analytical work, policy development and operations.

26. Overall, sustainable development is not only about ensuring that economic, social and environmental perspectives are reflected in the strategic planning process of United Nations organizations but that together, these perspectives form a holistic way of "doing business", a process of thinking at all levels that guides the kind of strategic planning and operational choices that follow. The application of an integrated and sustainable approach for decision-making in the United Nations system is currently uneven, revealing an institutional gap between policy and practice.

IV. Sustainable development at the country, regional and global levels

27. At the Rio+20 Conference, it was recognized that coordination among United Nations system entities in the economic, social and environmental areas can enhance United Nations system support to sustainable development. Numerous coordination mechanisms exist and a wealth of initiatives have been undertaken at the national, regional and global levels to integrate the United Nations system's work on the three dimensions of sustainable development. These can be built upon to accelerate the mainstreaming process.

A. Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development at the national and subnational levels

28. The United Nations system plays an important role in helping countries to define and implement their pathways towards sustainable development. In preparation for the Rio+20 Conference, Governments identified five priority areas for advancing sustainable development: (a) strengthening institutions and governance systems and building capacities for collaboration and coordination; (b) unpacking and operationalizing the green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development; (c) reinforcing the connection between poverty eradication as an overarching objective and the sustainable development agenda; (d) engaging stakeholders in a meaningful manner; and (e) measuring progress in a way that looks across the three dimensions of sustainable development. Owing to its comparative advantage in norm-setting, capacity-building, knowledge creation and sharing, and partnership-building, the United Nations is poised to address such priorities[4] as well as many other areas where sustainable development can be supported and strengthened.

29. Governments attach great importance to United Nations support in the area of sustainable development. In a survey conducted for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2012, "environment and sustainable development" was ranked by Governments as the most important area among the Organization's contributions at the country level. For example, 93 out of 111 Governments were of the view that the

[4] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP, Synthesis of National Reports for Rio+20, 2012.

United Nations was especially significant in this area. A total of 80 per cent of the Governments that responded to the same survey also singled out environment and sustainable development as the most critical area of United Nations assistance in the next four years. As a result, both the Rio+20 outcome document and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review invite United Nations entities to further enhance the mainstreaming of sustainable development in their respective mandates, programmes, strategies and decision-making processes.

30. Nevertheless, requests by Governments for United Nations support in the area of sustainable development originated overwhelmingly from the Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources. Some requests concerned support for green economy strategies, which were largely viewed as an environmental issue. A number also related to building national institutions able to pursue sustainable development.[5]

31. As a result, United Nations support focused predominantly on the environmental dimension of sustainable development. This emphasis on one dimension misses many potential benefits, such as integrated national planning, human resources development, education and labour/employment policies.

32. In the area of policy development, the United Nations development system has gained experience in supporting countries to develop nationally owned strategies with clear goals and targets such as the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed targets. These efforts, which have been limited mainly to social issues, provide useful experiences and lessons for the broader integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development. A 2012 survey of United Nations country teams on Rio+20 themes revealed that a number of country teams had successes in helping countries to include some aspects of sustainable development dimensions in broader national planning efforts.[5]

Box 5
UNDP/UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative

The UNDP/UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative shows how cooperation in support of Governments helps to make sustainable development happen in the context of national strategies. In Bangladesh, assistance to the Ministries of Planning, Environment and Finance since 2008 has had promising results: (a) poverty-environment-climate issues have been incorporated into key national and sectoral planning documents; (b) a climate public expenditure and institutional review has allowed the Government to ensure that funds for adapting or mitigating climate change are allocated the best way; and (c) proposals seeking public funding in Bangladesh must now demonstrate the percentage of poor people who will benefit, what the impact on natural resources will be, and the extent of resilience of new infrastructure to climate change.

[5] See United Nations Development Group Task Team on Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Rio+20, Report of Findings from a Survey of United Nations Country Teams on Rio+20 Themes, 19 March 2012.

33. In 2012, a significant number of Governments reported greater alignment between country priorities and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. This shows a movement towards integrating priorities and objectives at the country level that should aid in furthering sustainable development in countries where planning documents integrate sustainable development.[6]

34. In the area of programming, the United Nations Development Group has defined environmental sustainability as one of the five programming principles to be applied by United Nations country teams in preparing and implementing the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. A peer review of the Frameworks signed in 2010 showed that work in this area is somewhat narrowly focused on environmental issues.[7] Since the United Nations Development Group is developing new guidelines for preparing the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, it will be important to ensure that sustainable development and the need to address its three dimensions are mainstreamed in all such Frameworks.

Box 6
United Nations Development Group

Various United Nations Development Group mechanisms produce detailed operational guidance on specific themes for use across organizations in their country-level work. In 2009, the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Rio+20 developed a guidance note on mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country analysis and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, responding to demands by United Nations country teams for such a tool. There are also guidelines on integrating climate change[a] and indigenous people's issues in country analysis and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.[b] United Nations Development Group task teams provide periodic training on such guidance to ensure their effective use in planning and programming, including integrated training on environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

[a] http://www.undg.org/docs/11473/UNDG-GuidanceNote_ClimateChange-July2011.pdf.
[b] http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=270.

35. Going forward, gaps and challenges that hinder the United Nations development system in mainstreaming sustainable development at the country level must be identified, addressed and regularly monitored and evaluated. Enhanced coordination within the United Nations country teams is critical in that regard. For example, in the surveys conducted for the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy

[6] See report entitled "Results of survey of UN Resident Coordinators and members of UN country teams: Preparation for the 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System", available from http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/2012qcpr.htm.
[7] See United Nations Development Assistance Framework Programming Network, United Nations Development Group, Synthesis of an inter-agency peer desk review of 2010 signed UNDAFs.

review, nearly 20 per cent of Governments and United Nations country teams noted that sustainable development is among the areas most susceptible to competition among United Nations agencies for financial resources.

36. Cooperation between United Nations country teams and international financial institutions remains relatively weak. For example, only 5.5 per cent of United Nations country team members perceived cooperation with the World Bank to be "very effective"; in the case of the regional development banks, the percentage was 3.6.[6] It is worth noting that environmental protection is one of the areas where such cooperation is taking place and seen as relatively effective.

37. To overcome fragmentation, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandated several measures to improve country-level coordination, for example, strengthening the authority of the resident coordinator, harmonizing agency-specific programming instruments and processes in alignment with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and better capturing the expertise of non-resident agencies.

38. Beyond coordination, United Nations country teams identified other challenges and gaps,[5] including limited financial and human resources, in both Governments and United Nations country teams, and high turnover in management and project staff; insufficient coordination in Governments; lack of knowledge and reliable data and information; sustainable development themes being a low government priority and the concepts not being well-understood; and Governments being in the process of significant change.

39. Correspondingly, a number of suggestions to improve country-level service delivery were identified by United Nations country teams.[5] These included focusing on national ownership and capacity enhancement; supporting greater coordination and information-sharing; ensuring adequate and predictable resources; establishing capacity-building programmes within Government and the United Nations to better integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development; and simplifying routine organizational procedures and norms for addressing emerging issues.

40. At the subnational level, effective approaches are important to engage people and communities together with local authorities, agencies and other partners in sustainable development planning processes and implementation systems. This in turn contributes to informing national-level strategies, policies and plans.

Box 7
Tools to help support countries in sustainable development

The African Development Bank (AfdB), the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed a toolkit of policy options to support inclusive green growth.[a] The toolkit combines existing tools, such as environmental fiscal reform and social protection, from all three dimensions of sustainable development and assesses them accordingly.

A global survey on integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources was conducted for the 2012 UN-Water report "UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water: The Challenge of Extending and Sustaining

Services". It provides guidance for establishing a regular international monitoring and reporting framework to promote sustainable development and water resources management.

The Joint United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)-UNEP Programme on Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production promotes the implementation of resource-efficient practices and green technologies in the industrial sectors of developing countries. It operates national cleaner production centres in 41 developing countries.

[a] Available from http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/toolkit-inclusive-green-growth/.

Box 8

Integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions in national policies

ILO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted joint assessments on costing of social protection floors in El Salvador, Mozambique and Viet Nam. Further work is under way in other countries, including Benin, Cambodia and Nepal.

IMF helps to design fiscal policy to mitigate greenhouse gases and provides technical assistance to countries interested in environmental tax reform. Fiscal policies have a critical role to play in "getting the prices right" (incorporating environmental side effects into the prices firms and households pay for energy or transportation) to promote greener growth.

B. Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development at the regional and subregional levels

41. At the regional level, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system takes place through: (a) intergovernmental meetings and processes of the five regional commissions; and (b) regional activities of the secretariats of the five regional commissions and United Nations inter-agency support mechanisms, such as the regional coordination mechanism, convened by regional commissions and United Nations Development Group regional teams.

42. The intergovernmental meetings of the regional commissions play an important role in relating international agreements on sustainable development to the regional and national levels. This role is likely to be enhanced by the decision of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) at its last regional implementation meeting to replace the meeting with a high-level regional political forum on sustainable development, in preparation for future sessions of the high-level political forum on

sustainable development created at Rio+20.[8] Regional conferences of specialized agencies have also proved to be effective in mainstreaming policy and programmes since they bring together cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary actors under a government-driven platform.

43. A study done in 2011 on regional dimensions of the United Nations[9] found that the secretariats of the regional commissions were seen as multidisciplinary knowledge hubs and thus well-placed to support regional intergovernmental processes and actions and to strengthen United Nations inter-agency cooperation and coordination at the regional and subregional levels.

44. The regional coordination mechanism aims to develop a shared vision on sustainable development in the regions and promote the joint implementation of sustainable development commitments and policies, including the Rio+20 outcome, by all United Nations entities active in the regions. The mechanism is also used to strengthen coordination among the work programmes of United Nations system organizations at the regional level. United Nations Development Group regional teams provide leadership, strategic guidance and support to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams for the achievement of country-level results. In its resolution 67/226, the General Assembly asked resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to draw more upon the normative support work and policy expertise that exists within the regional commissions and requested the regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives (see para. 150 of the resolution). This makes it all the more important for the secretariats of the regional commissions to integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions, and their interactions, in their analytical work.

45. In recent years, work at the regional level has moved towards supporting a more integrated approach to development. Some regional commissions are coordinating around themes, including those directly related to sustainable development (for example, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Union of South American Nations joint action plan on social issues, energy infrastructure and other issues). More integrated thinking is also being seen in some regional publications. Innovative tools are also being developed, such as the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) indicators for sustainable development, used to gauge alignment with the three dimensions of sustainable development, or the joint Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)-Eurostat-OECD framework for the measurement of sustainable development.

46. All the regional commissions have been promoting the development of environmentally sustainable economic agendas as a path for development in their respective regions. Since the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in 2005, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been promoting green growth, sustainable urbanization, energy security and water resources management and has supported a sustainable and green future for the Asia-Pacific region.

47. The secretariats of the regional commissions play an important role in the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in the work of the United

[8] See E/ECA/CFSSD/8/4/Rev.1, para. 12 (a).

[9] *The Regional Dimension of Development and the UN System*, a study sponsored by the United Nations regional commissions, November 2011.

Nations. However, they currently maintain sectoral divisions and committees, making the integration of the three dimensions in their work challenging. There is an awareness of this obstacle and plans to evolve structures in at least the Asia-Pacific region have been made. Some regional commissions, such as ESCWA, are having sectoral divisions lead on multisectoral issues; for example, its Social Development Division is leading on small and medium-sized enterprises and capacities to sustain rural livelihoods and employment. ESCWA's workplan for 2014/15 is more integrated than those of previous years because of increased inter-divisional consultations.

48. The 2011 study mentioned in paragraph 43 above identified a need for better integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Its recommendations include the need for a coherent regional strategy for development; further development of the regional coordination mechanisms as vehicles for policy and programme coordination at the levels of heads of agencies and senior officials; and greater coherence and cohesiveness between the work of regional coordination mechanisms and regional United Nations Development Group teams.

49. The 2011 study also identified a significant degree of engagement by United Nations organizations with non-United Nations regional intergovernmental bodies and entities. This helps to inject sustainable development approaches in other forums and enrich the United Nations approach through learning from other experiences.

C. Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development at the global level

Intergovernmental bodies

50. At the global level, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system should be bolstered by the guidance of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP and the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations.

51. A cursory review of a few intergovernmental decisions in recent years shows that consideration of sustainable and/or integrated development approaches has not been systematic.

52. The General Assembly considers sustainable development issues in both its Second and Third Committees. The Second Committee has a dedicated item on sustainable development. The Second Committee considers the economic dimension while the Third Committee focuses on the social dimension. Interaction between the two Committees is nevertheless limited, which hinders the ability of the Assembly to give impetus to integrated policymaking.

53. The Economic and Social Council is the United Nations body that deals with the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and environmental fields. Yet, it remains a challenge for the Council to look at the three dimensions of sustainable development in all its outcomes. The ongoing consultations on the strengthening of the Council are an opportunity to gear the Council and its subsidiary machinery towards achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 83).

54. Ensuring coherent intergovernmental guidance on sustainable development is complicated by each United Nations system organization having its own governing body. Decisions by executive boards of funds and programmes and governing bodies of specialized agencies also often do not systematically integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

55. Such considerations led the Rio+20 Conference to launch a major change in the institutional framework for sustainable development. It emphasized the need to improve implementation, coordination, coherence and integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

56. A cornerstone of this reform was the decision to establish a high-level political forum on sustainable development. Intergovernmental negotiations on the format and organizational aspects of the forum's work are ongoing. Without prejudging their outcome, it is clear that the forum could give impetus to integrating sustainable development as an overarching framework to the work of all United Nations system intergovernmental bodies and organizations. This would help Member States to send a unified message to United Nations system organizations, including through their respective governing bodies, on the need to take an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental policies and actions.

57. The forum should also help to integrate the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, which represents the environmental dimension of sustainable development, within its own work and other strands of intergovernmental work.

58. There is also a need to find effective ways for the United Nations Secretariat and the entire United Nations system to support the work of the forum. Sustainable development should be consistently reflected in the analytical work of the United Nations in support of the high-level political forum. Disaggregated data collection and analysis are also needed to develop a better understanding of the trade-offs and synergies generated by an integrated approach.

59. Lessons from the past 20 years of inter-agency coordination, be it the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, coordination around clusters of issues or the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs plus model, could help to design a new structure to support preparations, follow-up and implementation of the forum's work.

60. The Economic and Social Council and the forum should ensure appropriate accountability of the United Nations system to Member States on how it supports sustainable development (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 78) and also reflect the interaction between government priorities and United Nations support. While the Council already has this role vis-à-vis United Nations operational activities, the forum could be the space for undertaking an overall review around specific themes or goals.

61. The work of the forum needs to be reinforced by ensuring that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery address sustainable development as an organizing principle of their work. As members of the governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations, Governments have also committed to take measures to ensure that organizations mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development in their operational work (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 94).

62. Ultimately, the success of a revamped intergovernmental framework for sustainable development will be measured by how well the sustainable development approach is integrated in United Nations support and national policies at the country level.

Inter-agency mechanisms

63. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which brings together the executive heads of 29 United Nations system organizations under the leadership of the Secretary-General, is taking specific actions towards integrating sustainable development dimensions within the United Nations system.

64. The contribution of CEB and its subsidiary bodies, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group can be manifold. It can mobilize the United Nations system's expertise or experience; enable synergies that result from aggregating and coordinating ongoing processes across the United Nations system; define a framework for addressing longer-term issues; or bring together the normative and operational aspects of sustainable development and help Member States to combine them effectively in policy formulation.

65. In October 2012 and April 2013, the High-level Committee on Programmes addressed the issue of sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The Committee concluded that mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system requires greater cooperation and collaboration among United Nations organizations on sectoral, technical and programmatic issues in order for the Member States to benefit from the combination of system-wide specialized knowledge and operational expertise.

66. The High-level Committee on Programmes selected a range of critical sustainable development issues that warrant consideration within the United Nations system over the next three to five years. These include population dynamics; migration; land, food and nutrition security; and energy, water, climate change and oceans.

67. Within CEB, UN-Energy, UN-Water, UN-Oceans, the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change work to enhance coherence and coordination among a broad range of United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in response to specific global sustainable development challenges. UN-Water is in the process of finalizing a joint United Nations system position in support of possible water-related targets in the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. UN-Energy brings United Nations system organizations together in support of Member States' actions by focusing on an integrated approach between energy and other sustainable development factors.

68. Concrete steps towards mainstreaming sustainability in the area of management are also being undertaken by the High-level Committee on Management. In 2013 the Committee decided that all member organizations will move towards adopting and implementing environmental management systems through a gradual, voluntary and flexible process, starting with initiatives that carry a low implementation cost. These actions will contribute to reducing the United Nations system's environmental footprint through better management practices, improved efficiencies and a reduction

in operating costs. Significant additional savings could be generated, including from integrated waste and wastewater management, construction and vehicle procurement/maintenance (see box 4 above).

69. Other coordination mechanisms exist outside CEB, such as the Environment Management Group and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs plus,[10] which helped to prepare Rio+20 and now works on its follow-up.

70. The United Nations also created a task team on the post-2015 development agenda and a technical support team on sustainable development goals to support intergovernmental processes in those areas.

71. Inter-agency structures have played an important role in specific endeavours of the United Nations system to mainstream major themes in its work (see box 9 below), particularly climate change and gender equality. Lessons can be drawn from these experiences for mainstreaming sustainable development.

72. These various efforts have brought about a proliferation of inter-agency mechanisms and have occasionally posed difficulties in ensuring coherent guidance on integrating the three dimensions, while also limiting the effectiveness of inter-agency work at the level of individual agencies and in countries.

73. There may be a need for an overarching framework for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development at all levels of the work of the United Nations system, be it policies, programmes or operations management, or analytical, normative or operational work. The sustainability framework developed by the Environment Management Group can serve as a basis for moving in that direction, provided the economic dimension is integrated. CEB can play an important role in guiding the development of such a framework.

Box 9
Mainstreaming thematic issues in the work of the United Nations system

Climate change

Although often perceived as environmental in nature, the complex challenges of climate change also affect the social and economic sectors, requiring a multidisciplinary solution that speaks to all levels of development activities. From this, multiple points of coordination for mainstreaming climate change considerations have been engaged in the United Nations system.

The CEB framework for action on climate change endorsed in 2008 seeks to maximize synergies, eliminate duplication and overlap, and optimize the impact of the collective efforts of the United Nations system in supporting countries in implementing strategies to address climate change. The High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change facilitates United Nations system follow-up to the framework for action.

[10] The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs works through 10 clusters, including 1 on social development; see http://www.un.org/en/development/other/ecesa/mission.shtml.

Many of the challenges faced at the country level have a climate change component. This has become more widely understood through efforts to mainstream climate change in country-level planning, supported by guidance and training by the United Nations Development Group.

Gender

Strengthening gender mainstreaming came as a response to the series of United Nations conferences on women and gender equality. A United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women was endorsed by CEB in 2006. In response, two of potentially three interconnecting and mutually reinforcing mechanisms have been developed as an accountability framework for implementation:

(a) A system-wide action plan on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the individual United Nations entity level. This action plan was approved by CEB in 2012. Unified annual reporting for the action plan began in 2013, the results of which will set a baseline for reporting to ensure United Nations system accountability;

(b) United Nations country team performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women was introduced in 2008. The indicators focus on the performance of United Nations country teams as a whole, for example, with respect to the quality of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, including its development and monitoring and evaluation; joint programmes and programming; and capacity development with counterparts;

(c) The third mechanism, accountability for the United Nations system's contributions to gender equality development results at the country and normative levels, is expected to be developed after the first two have taken root more firmly.

Accountability frameworks have required heavy initial investment of time, resources and staff, suggesting the suitability of a phased approach in the initial and intermediate stages of their development and implementation.

V. Strengths, challenges, gaps and lessons learned

74. The integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions, together with the issues of coherence and coordination, need to be central to discussions on implementing sustainable development. The United Nations system has extensive knowledge of the three dimensions and a number of innovative collaborations exist, such as the work of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board on social protection floors of the Poverty-Environment Initiative. Guidance from coordination mechanisms is strengthening coherence across organizations. However, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system and in its support to Member States and partners is uneven and remains

hindered by key challenges and gaps. A number of strengths, challenges, gaps and lessons learned are outlined below.

75. **Strengths.** A number of broad institutional strengths and accomplishments in integrating sustainable development exist:

(a) There is a high level of institutional awareness that an integrated approach to address interlinkages in development is an important and necessary evolution of the development agenda and that sustainable development is the overarching framework to make that happen;

(b) There is a comprehensive array of knowledge and skills within the United Nations system that address all three dimensions of sustainable development, strengthened further by strategic partnerships;

(c) A series of coordination mechanisms are in place at all levels to support policy coherence and multidisciplinary approaches, two important building blocks of sustainable development that should be further strengthened;

(d) The United Nations system takes both a top-down (from strategic plans to programmes) and bottom-up (from country and programme realities to strategic plans) approach to integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions in its work. Some innovative work has been done from the bottom up, where the theory of sustainable development is put into practice and institutional learning serves to continuously improve projects and programmes that are driven by national and subnational needs;

(e) There are examples of innovative programmes, some in place for over a decade, that integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

76. **Challenges and gaps.** Broad institutional challenges limiting the integration of sustainable development dimensions were found, including:

(a) *Unclear and inconsistent terminology and understanding.* A broad common understanding of what it means to translate sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system is still needed. This would support the development of clear common objectives on sustainable development and help to determine, in many cases, what has been achieved on sustainable development;

(b) *Sectoral silos.* The overall institutional arrangements remain shaped along sectoral lines, hindering efforts for a more integrated approach to development. The same challenge persists at the national level with sectoral government ministries. There is a need to change sectoral thinking and pursue integrated practices in the United Nations system. This will also require a reassessment of needed staff competencies and regular training of staff to ensure that sustainable development translates into their work, be it analytical or operational;

(c) *Imbalances among the three dimensions.* Cooperation among United Nations entities in the economic, social and environmental pillars is increasing. However, additional efforts are needed to collectively help Governments to develop policies that pursue the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development together. Cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the rest of the United Nations system needs to be further deepened, building on the good progress made in recent years and months;

(d) *Lack of a process to assess impact or measure progress.* While many processes and mechanisms are in place to help facilitate the integration of sustainable development, there is currently no common capability to assess impact or measure progress in the integration of sustainable development, including into programming and projects;

(e) *Difficulty in scaling up successes.* While a number of positive examples of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development can be identified, how to scale up those successes remains a challenge;

(f) *Knowledge.* The United Nations system requires further analysis and guidance on how to mainstream sustainable development, not only at the policy level but also at the project/programme level to help move policy to practice;

(g) *Resource constraints.* Insufficient resources within Governments or for the United Nations system was often cited as an obstacle to integrating the three dimensions, fostering coordination and building capacity;

(h) *Partnership.* Sustainable development requires an enhanced level of engagement and a more inclusive approach to partnerships, such as including major groups[11] and other stakeholders in the country-level planning process.

77. **Lessons learned.** Overall, lessons can be learned from the various efforts to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development and from United Nations system experiences in mainstreaming other issues or thematic areas in the work of the United Nations system (see box 9 above):

(a) *Ensure high-level support.* Mainstreaming efforts have used entry points at the headquarters or country levels. Either way, an intergovernmental mandate or decision is needed at some juncture to enable the initiative to build, sustain momentum and attract the resources it needs. It is important that a unified message come from the intergovernmental bodies;

(b) *Engage Member States and the United Nations system with a common purpose at the global, regional and country levels.* Work through the inter-agency machinery to translate that purpose into activities and policies;

(c) *Develop a clear methodology, guidance and/or tools that include a clear objective and how to reach it.* Although some individual United Nations entities have developed tools and guidance to further sustainable development in their work, the United Nations system does not yet have a set of unified measurable objectives for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. The development of the sustainable development goals should help to address this;

(d) *Capacity-building.* This is needed to ensure effective understanding of how to use tools and report effectively. Enhanced analytical work is also needed on how to develop and implement integrated policies;

(e) *Establish a common reporting mechanism.* This may be accompanied by a set of indicators to measure progress over time.

[11] Major groups include business and industry, children and young people, farmers, indigenous peoples, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the scientific and technological community, women, workers and trade unions.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

78. Today's development realities challenge the United Nations system to work across its own structures and mandates and to better integrate economic, social and environmental concerns into its policy, programmatic and operational activities.

79. The present report has shown that coordination mechanisms and policies are increasingly in place to support an integrated approach but that, in many cases, much more needs to be achieved. Sustainable development has grown from theory to good practice, but the impact of the United Nations system's interventions has not been systematically captured to aid institutional learning. The breadth of what sustainable development means for the full range of United Nations system activities has not yet been fully grasped.

80. The development community is on the cusp of an historic opportunity, since a new overarching development agenda and sustainable development goals are being developed. These will play a critical role as guideposts for nationally owned policies, international cooperation and the work of the United Nations system. The system must be ready to support their implementation when they are agreed upon in 2015.

81. The high-level political forum created at the Rio+20 Conference could have a key role in reviewing the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda and in spurring an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental dimensions throughout the United Nations system bodies and organizations. The United Nations system must mobilize to support its role in the most effective way.

Recommendations

82. Within this broad context, a few steps could be taken in the future, with guidance from Member States:

(a) A road map for accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system would provide a useful framework for action. This could involve recommendations for developing a framework based on the environment and social sustainability framework initiated by the Environment Management Group;

(b) The Secretary-General could report to the high-level political forum on progress by the United Nations system in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in its work. In general, reporting could start in 2014 and include an account of how the United Nations system will help the Secretariat to support the high-level political forum and of progress on developing the above-mentioned road map. A subsequent report in 2015 could outline a road map and framework for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system. Following that, the Secretary-General could report every two years on the topic;

(c) As Member States engage in the development of a new generation of strategic plans for 2014-2017 for some of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, it will be important to bear in mind the recommendation in the Rio+20 outcome document that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system consider appropriate measures for integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions across

the operational activities of the United Nations system. The respective secretariats will provide the support needed by Member States to prepare strategic plans that address the three dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated fashion;

(d) The United Nations country teams have a wealth of guidance notes and related material to draw from in preparing United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. As such, the main thematic elements of sustainable development are covered; what is missing is a clear direction emphasizing the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. As part of its ongoing review, the United Nations Development Group should ensure that the guidelines for the preparation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks are aligned with sustainable development principles and supportive of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. A dialogue with partner Governments will be important, since United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks are planning frameworks shared with Governments and are developed in response to key development plans.